

THE HOMILIST.

EDITED BY

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.,

OF LONDON,

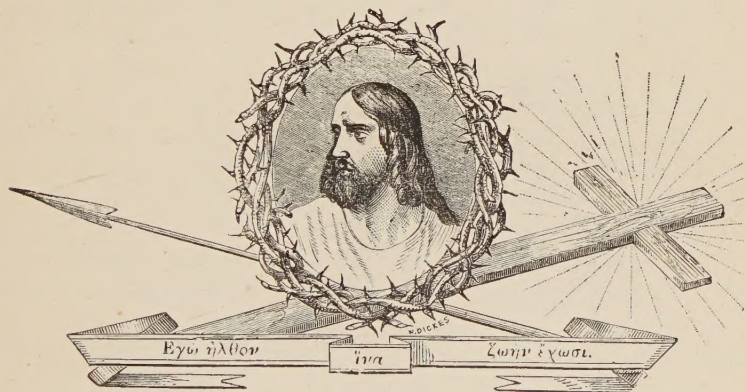
AND

URIJAH REES THOMAS,

OF BRISTOL.

VOL. VII., EXCELSIOR SERIES,

VOLUME L. FROM COMMENCEMENT.



“THE LETTER KILLETH, BUT THE SPIRIT GIVETH LIFE.”—*Paul.*

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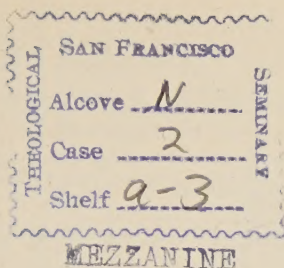
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PREFACE.

THIS Volume being the FIFTIETH from commencement, and the last under the direction of the present Editor, does not require the reprint of the original introduction attached to the previous volumes. All the articles are as *unfinished, unpolemical, and undenominational*, as the previous ones. The last Leading Homily in this volume may interest the many thousands of clergymen and ministers in every part of Christendom, who have been its adherents and students from the beginning, inasmuch as it sketches the genesis, growth, and influence of "THE HOMILIST." With hearty thanks to all who have encouraged him from the beginning, and wishing them all good here and yonder, now and for ever, hoping to meet in higher worlds, the Editor subscribes himself, most affectionately their friend,

Erewn, Upper Tulse Hill, London.

DAVID THOMAS.

THE HOMILIST

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Leading Homily.

THE MAN OF NOBLEST CHOICE.

“ BY FAITH MOSES, WHEN HE WAS COME TO YEARS, REFUSED TO BE CALLED THE SON OF PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER. CHOOSING RATHER TO SUFFER AFFLICTION WITH THE PEOPLE OF GOD, THAN TO ENJOY THE PLEASURES OF SIN FOR A SEASON. ESTEEMING THE REPROACH OF CHRIST GREATER RICHES THAN THE TREASURES IN EGYPT: FOR HE HAD RESPECT UNTO THE RECOMPENCE OF THE REWARD.” *Heb. xi. 24-26.*

IN reading these verses several questions urge themselves on our attention. What is meant by the expression, “*When he was come to years?*” The answer, I think, is this, when he reached maturity, when he reached the full manhood of his life, and all his faculties were vigorous and in full play. His whole life was divided into three equal periods; forty years he spent in the royal court of Egypt as the adopted son of Pharaoh’s daughter, forty years in Midian, and forty years in conducting the children of Israel through the wilderness to the verge of the promised land. It must, therefore, have been when he was about forty years of age that is here

meant by the expression, "When he was come to years." What is meant by the expression, "*Refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter?*" For forty years he had been acknowledged as her son, treated as her son, enjoyed all the royal privileges of her son, but now he renounced the relationship, and renounced all the honours and enjoyments connected therewith. Another question is, "What is meant by the words to "*Suffer affliction with the people of God?*" The children of Abraham, undoubtedly, the Israelites, are meant. They were the chosen of God to enjoy special privileges and to discharge a special mission on the earth. Their "affliction" here mentioned referred to the oppressions, and the cruelties they endured under the despotism of Pharaoh. These are described in Exodus i. 13 14. "And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor, and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage," &c. The meaning is that Moses resolved to identify himself with the children of Abraham, the "people of God," his own race, in all their oppressions and afflictions. Another question is, what is meant by the phrase, "*To enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season?*" Primarily, the pleasures of the Egyptian court. The members of a royal family generally abound in the resources of pleasure, they have everything that can gratify their senses, their appetites, and their mental cravings: and these pleasures are too frequently, alas, the "pleasures of sin." It was so in the Egyptian court, and it is too generally so in all the courts of royalty. Another question is, What is meant by the expression, "*The reproach of Christ?*" Did he know Christ? Fifteen long centuries would roll away before He

would appear on the earth, and endure "reproach." The word Christ means *anointed*, and is applied in the Old Testament to the "people of God" collectively, and the expression may mean the reproaches of God's people. Yet another question is here urged on our attention. What is meant by the words, "*The recompence of the reward?*" Does this mean the possession of Canaan? Though he never entered the promised land, he was undoubtedly influenced by the Divine promise of its becoming the inheritance of the children of Abraham to whom he belonged, and with whose interests he identified himself. But, perhaps, the words point to the culminating retributions of eternity.

Now in order to give the text a practical meaning to us all, and to men everywhere and at all times, I would fasten attention upon three general remarks which it suggests, viz.—*That sin here has its pleasures; that religion here has its trials; that destiny here has its choice.*

I. SIN HERE, NOT YONDER, HAS ITS PLEASURES.—"Enjoy the pleasures of sin." The men who deny this proposition are blind to the facts of human nature, and to the general experience of mankind. But what are the "*pleasures of sin?*" Not all pleasures. The benign Creator has so constituted us that pleasure comes with the gratification of every sense, and the relief of every craving appetite. How many pleasurable sensations are conveyed to us through beautiful forms, and melodious sounds; through fruits delicious to the palate, and touches that thrill the nerves; through the bracing breeze and the glowing light. Aye, there are pleasures that come to us in this natural way that make us feel that to live is delicious, and that we are breathing Elysian atmospheres, and feasting with the

gods. These pleasures are not the "*pleasures of sin.*" They are such that are enjoyed according to their nature and measure by all sentient beings; by the finny tribes of ocean, the winged tribes that luxuriate in [the sunny air, the creeping things on and under the earth, as well as the cattle that gambol on mountain and mead. What, then, are the "pleasures of sin?" They may, I think, be described *as all those pleasures that come to men as the result of their leading purpose and pursuit in life.* There are men by millions who go in for pleasure, they make it the grand purpose of their life. As beings endowed (as brutes are not) with the powers of imagination and contrivance, we can, by bringing the productions of the earth into new combinations, not only give our natural appetites inordinate fire and force, but can create new ones. But to do this is a perversion of nature, and all the gratifications rising out of those unnaturally heightened, and artificially created, appetites are the "pleasures of sin." And, alas! how they abound everywhere, how they preponderate over every simple natural gratification! (1) They include the pleasures of the *sensualist*. The sensualist is a man who pursues the pleasure of the senses. The voluptuary, the epicure, the wine-bibber, and the debauchee are all sensualists, and have they not pleasures? Undoubtedly, but their pleasures are the "pleasures of sin." (2) They include the pleasures of the *ambitious*. A desire to excel in true excellence is natural and right; both the pursuit and possessions of this will yield a pleasure that is innocent and natural. But the man who pursues pleasure turns this desire into worldly ambition, he transmutes it into a greed for power

over men. He labours and struggles for this power as the great purpose of his life. By methods often questionable, and seldom righteous, he obtains a high position, he is in the civic chair, on the judicial bench, or in the legislative assembly, men look up to him, flatter him, he looks down upon them with a supercilious and patronising air. In all this he has pleasures, but they are the "pleasures" of sin." (3) They include the pleasures of *avarice*. The acquisitive desire—as phrenologists term it—is an instinct in human nature. Both the pursuit and possession of what is really valuable yields pleasure. and is not the "pleasure of sin." The man who prizes pleasure turns this instinct into a passion for worldly wealth; for gold he plans and toils, he gains it, and its possession yields him pleasures, but the pleasures are the "pleasures of sin." He has perverted a divine instinct within him, turned it in a wrong direction, and instead of obtaining heavenly treasures, he has only gained an accumulation of worldly pelf. So that, I maintain, all the pleasures that come to a man as the result of the leading purpose of his life are the "pleasures of sin." The very purpose is a perversion of his nature and mission in life. Great is the distinction between pleasure and happiness. (a) The one is the gratification of some one appetite or passion. A physical nerve it may be, the seeing nerve, the hearing nerve, the smelling nerve, or the touching nerve has yielded a pleasant sensation. But these nerves are only part of our nature, and of our lower nature too. But *happiness* is a satisfying condition of the whole man, all the powers equally balanced and harmoniously developed. (b) The sources

of the one come from without, those of the other from within. They spring up from supreme sympathy with the true, the beautiful, and the good. (c) The one is often, as we have seen, sinful, the other never. We never read of sinful happiness, sin and happiness cannot co-exist, moral excellence is the only fountain of happiness. (d) The one is temporary, the “pleasures of sin for a season.” It cannot run into the future or survive our bodily dissolution; the other is permanent, it is a well springing up to eternal life. Another practical truth suggested by the text is that—

II. RELIGION HERE, NOT YONDER, HAS ITS TRIALS.—“Suffer affliction with the people of God. . . the reproach of Christ.” “The people of God” had their afflictions in the time of Moses, and they were severe, and they—the anointed ones of God, the *christs*—have had their afflictions from that day to this, and will to the end of time. Their trials are of two classes.

First: Those that come from *without*. “Marvel not (said Christ) that the world hateth you, it hated Me before it hated you.” Their trials come to them simply on account of their religion, for the same reason that they came to Christ. “If ye were of the world, the world would love its own.” The *christs*, the anointed people, like the Christ of *christs*, have always been persecuted by the world in some form or other. To what slanders, obliquies, insults, indignities, and cruelties was Jesus of Nazareth subject when on this earth! Why? Because He lived righteousness, the moral radiance of His character exposed the corruptions of His contemporaries, His doctrines wounded their prejudices, and sapped the

foundation of their influence. Were a man to appear in England to-day, to live religion as Christ lived it, what terrible afflictions would soon befall him! Let him denounce, day by day, the cupidity of our traders, the ignorance, the narrowness, the hypocrisy and the greed of thousands of our public teachers of religion, the self seeking of our legislators, the ambitions, the vanities and the sensualities of many of our rulers; let him keep on day by day, as Christ did, thundering against wrong-doers everywhere, and would he not arouse the wrath of his age against him? It is an universal fact that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Their trials are

Secondly: Those that come from *within*. Agonising wrestlings against pernicious prejudices and sinful habits, poignant compunctions and bitter humiliations, at the felt distance between what they are and what they ought to be, between the actual and the ideal, believe me that the inner life of a religious man in this world is a life of great trial. It is a campaign where the foes are numerous and strong, where the struggles are strenuous and continued, and where defeats are sometimes overwhelmingly distressing. Religion, then, here has its trials. I say *here*, not yonder. "The people of God," the anointed ones, will be delivered from all afflictions in the great hereafter beyond the grave. "And one of the elders asked me, and said, What are these that are arrayed in white garments, and whence came they? And I said, Sir, thou knowest, and he said, These are they that came out of great tribulation," &c. (Rev. vii. 13-17). The other practical truth suggested by the text is that:—

III. DESTINY HERE, NOT YONDER, IS AT OUR CHOICE.

“Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God.” This choice is the great choice of our earthly life. As a free agent, man has the power of “choosing,” and this power he is employing every day. His choosings are numerous and varied, evermore is he choosing this, and rejecting that, but this is *the one great choice*, the choice that decides his destiny. I make three remarks about this choice, which Moses made between sin and its pleasures, and religion and its trials—

First: It was a choice which he made in his *full manhood*. He was not a child, not a youth, not in the state of juvenescence, when he came to this decision. He was forty years of age, in the prime of manhood. He had seen life in its varied phases.

Secondly: It was a choice which he made *not from impulse, but from judgment*. “Esteeming the reproach of Christ.” How often our choice is made from the rush of a sudden impulse; and often, therefore, proves unwise and pernicious. But the reason of Moses was mature, reason trained in all the learning of Egypt. He calmly weighed the two conditions—sin and its pleasures, and religion and its trials; weighed them in the balance of an enlightened judgment; and he rejected the one, and accepted the other.

Thirdly: It was a choice *determined by his faith in future retribution*. “He had respect unto the recompence of the reward;” or, as the New Version has it, “he looked unto the recompence of reward.” He acted from *foresight*. He believed in a future, a future into which the consequences of our present lives would be carried, and where the “pleasures of sin” would

be no more, and where the "people of God" would have a full "recompence" for all their trials and struggles in the present life. Was he influenced in his choice by the hope of future reward? He might have been to some extent; for it is natural. Is it right to be influenced by such considerations? I am disposed to say, No, to that question. But this I maintain, that no man can form a *true estimate* of human life that does not take the future into account, as well as the present. The man who would form a proper judgment of the climate of one year must have regard to all the seasons, not to one only. One brief day here is not the sum of our life, it is a mere fraction; reason and the Bible attest this. There is a future, immeasurably greater, and the future is the recompensing part of our existence, and we must have "respect" to it. Paul did so. "I reckon that the sufferings of this present world are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall hereafter be revealed to us." Thus let us act. Look to the future, follow our life on, and mark well whither its steps are tending.

CONCLUSION :—Who will not say that Moses was the *man of noblest choice*? He used the highest prerogative of his being, the power of choosing in the wisest way, his choice made him the great man he became, and how great he was! Of all the world's great men, Moses is the greatest. He was the historian of the creation, his pen detailed the remodelling of this planet, as a suitable habitation for man, the origin of the race, and the stirring and extraordinary events that transpired in the first stages of human history. He was the legislator, not of a district or a class, but of

the world. His code embodied principles on which all governments should be based, to which all men are amenable, and by which all men are to be judged at last. He was the conqueror of Egypt's proud monarch, he broke the iron rod of the oppressor, freed his race from a crushing and ignominious thralldom, and became the founder of the most glorious commonwealth that ever appeared on the stage of time. He was an eminent type of the Son of God; and ages after his departure from the world he appeared with Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration, and talked with Christ about the death that He should accomplish at Jerusalem. From no man did there ever issue such a deep and ever-swelling stream of influence, as from Moses. His name figures in all literature, floats in the traditions of heathens, is a household word in all Christendom, is dear to all the good on earth, and mingles with the songs of heaven.

MORAL COURAGE.—“ A great deal of talent is lost in the world for the want of a little courage. Every day sends to their graves a number of obscure men, who have only remained in obscurity because their timidity has prevented them from making a first effort; and who, if they could have been induced to begin, would in all probability have gone great lengths in the career of fame. The fact is that to do anything in this world worth doing, we must not stand back shivering and thinking of the cold and danger, but jump in and scramble through as well as we can. It will not do to be perpetually calculating risks and adjusting nice chances; it did very well before the flood, when a man could consult his friends upon an intended publication for a hundred and fifty years, and then live to see its success afterwards; but at present a man waits, and doubts, and consults his brother, and his particular friends, till one fine day he finds that he is sixty years of age; that he has lost so much time in consulting his first cousins and particular friends that he has no more time to follow their advice.”

SIDNEY SMITH.

The Preacher's Homiletical Commentary.

HOMILETIC SKETCHES ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

OUR PURPOSE.—Many learned and devout men have gone *Philologically* through this *TEHELIM*, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough HOMILETIC treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

OUR METHOD.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) THE HISTORY of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) ANNOTATIONS of the passages. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase or allusion that may occur.—(3) The ARGUMENT of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is amongst the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) The HOMILETICS of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately deduced, as to suggest such thoughts and indicate such sermonizing methods as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

No. CLI.

The Commendable Conduct of Man under Trial.

“OUT OF THE DEPTHS HAVE I CRIED UNTO THEE, O LORD,” &c.—
Ps. cxxx. 1-8. *

HISTORY:—Neither the author or date of this Psalm can be determined. The general impression is that its reference is to the time of the captivity. Israel is in distress, and the author identifies himself in its sorrows and its sentiments. The church of Rome appropriates this Psalm to its especial use, and makes it speak the distresses and the longings of the souls who are in purgatory; and makes

it a mass song in connection with the religious services of the departed. If there be a purgatory beyond the grave or not no one can determine. One thing is certain, that there are souls on this earth that are in purgatorial fires, overwhelmed with distress, and crying mightily to God.

ANNOTATIONS:—Ver. 1. “*Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord.*” “*Out of the depths do I call to Thee,*

* Articles on Psalms cxix, to cxxix. will be found in Vols. xlviii. and xlix.

Jahve."—*Delitzsch*. Deep waters are often employed as a symbol of great sorrow, hence elsewhere we have these words, "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in to my soul, I sink in deep mire," &c.

Ver. 2.—"*Lord, hear my voice, let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.*" How natural it is for men in overwhelming distress to cry to heaven for relief.

Ver. 3.—"*If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?*" The word "*mark*" here means literally keep or preserve, hence *Delitzsch* translates the clause, "If thou keepest iniquities, Jahve, Lord, who can stand?" The Almighty does not keep the iniquities of His creatures, as the man of vengeance keeps the insults and injuries of his offender. Were it so who could stand?

Ver. 4.—"*But there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared.*" Forgiveness is elsewhere spoken of as God burying sins in the sea, separating the sinner from them as far as the east is from the west, casting the sins behind His back. God does not keep iniquities, but in mercy throws them away, and that, in order that men

may fear Him, trust Him, and love Him.

Ver. 5.—"*I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His word do I hope.*" "I wait for Jehovah, my soul waits, and in His word do I hope."
—*Alexander*. I wait with all my soul or heart.

Ver. 6.—"*My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning. I say more than they that watch for the morning.*" "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than the night watchers for the morning; the night watchers for the morning."
—*Delitzsch*. "The phrase is repeated," says Dr. Murphy, "for poetical emphasis."

Ver. 7.—"*Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is mercy.*" Literally "the mercy," that is, mercy in all its plenitude, adequate to meet the needs of all men. "*And with Him is plenteous redemption.*" "It is like the sea," says Dr. Young, "which, however largely you may draw from it, is still inexhaustible."

Ver. 8.—"*And He shall redeem (or release) Israel from all his iniquities.*" This is the author's faith in the redeemed future of Israel.

ARGUMENT:—"This is the sixth of the penitential Psalms.

The sinner, conscious of the degradation and guilt of sin, encourages himself with the thought that there is a greater deep, viz., the deep of God's mercy, a deep which

nothing can exhaust. It is a deep not of mercy only, but of plenteous and complete salvation; and whosoever believes and trusts in it can never be disappointed."

HOMILETICS :—The subject which this Psalm presses on our attention, and serves to illustrate, is the *commendable conduct of man under great trial*. Here we have man under great trials doing four things : *imploping heaven, confessing sin, waiting on God, and exhorting others*. Here we have man under trial—

I. IMPLORING HEAVEN. "*Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord.*" Into what abysses of sorrow and suffering do men often sink in this life ! But why appeal to heaven in such terrible exigencies ? First : Because heaven alone can deliver. No individual strugglings, however strenuous and constant ; no priesthoods of any Church can effect a deliverance. Secondly : Because from the greatest depths heaven can hear the cries. God heard Jeremiah in the dungeon, Daniel in the lion's den, Jonah in the abysses of the sea. This appeal to God, therefore, in our trial is *commendable, wise, right, necessary*. Here we have man under trial—

II. CONFESSING SIN. "*If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark (keep) iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand ? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared.*" First : He identifies suffering with sin. This is commendable, for sin is the cause of sorrow, it "brought death into our world and all its woe." All evils, physical, intellectual, social, religious and political, spring from moral evil. All the billows of agony that

beat on human nature, have their well spring in sin. Secondly : He identifies deliverance with God's mercy. "*If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?*" This is commendable : (1) God is so merciful that He does not "*mark iniquities,*" that is, He does not keep, retain them. Malign natures never forget injuries, benevolent natures cannot retain them. Were He to mark them "*who should stand?*" The whole human race would be blotted out of existence. (2) God is so merciful that He forgives men their iniquities. "*There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared.*" The highest form of love is the *forgiving* love. (3) Because He is thus so merciful, men can trust Him. "*That Thou mayest be feared.*" Not servilely, but trustfully, lovingly, loyally, cheerfully. Had He not forgiveness in His nature, what rational soul could reverence Him? Here we have man under trial—

III. WAITING ON GOD. "*I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait.*" Waiting on God implies : (1) *Trusting* in God. Trusting in His wisdom, goodness, and rectitude. (2) *Expecting* from God. Expecting that He will interpose in mercy, and grant the necessary relief. (3) *Vigilance* of soul. It is not a passive state of mind, it is watchful and earnest. "*My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning.*" The season of great suffering is a stormy, starless season. "*More than they that watch for the morning.*" There is a morning for humanity. Now is not this a commendable state of mind for man in trial? Here we have man under trial—

IV. EXHORTING OTHERS. "*Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with*

Him is plenteous redemption." The exhortation is addressed to Israel, and is thus rendered, "Wait Israel for Jahve, for with Jahve is the mercy." He exhorts Israel to trust in the Lord for three reasons: First, Because there is mercy with Him. The mercy which the sufferer requires, mercy to succour and deliver. Secondly: Because there is plenteous redemption with Him. There is no limit to His redemptive willingness and ability. "Where sin abounded grace doth much more abound." Thirdly: Because all Israel will one day be redeemed. "*He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.*" The author, undoubtedly, had the belief that all evil will one day be swept from the face of the earth. Does not the Gospel intimate this? Did not Christ come into the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, to destroy the works of the devil? Did He not give Himself "to redeem us from our iniquity?" Now is this not commendable in trial? Great trials sometimes bury in the sufferer all consideration for others, he is absorbed in his poignant distresses. It is noble, therefore, to see a man overwhelmed with trials, looking out on the world with sympathy, and exhorting others to pursue the true methods of deliverance.

No. CXLII.

The Negative and Positive Excellencies of True Religion.

"LORD, MY HEART IS NOT HAUGHTY," &c.—Ps. cxxxi. 1-3.

HISTORY.—The general impression of Biblical critics concerning this Psalm, is that David was the author.

Some regard it as his reply to the reproach of his brother Eliab, who said to him, "I know thy pride

and the naughtiness of thy heart, for thou art come down, that thou mightest see the battle" (1 Sam. xvii. 28). Others see in it an echo of David's answer to the taunts of Michael, who said, "I will become of still less account than this, and I will be lowly in my own eyes" (2 Sam. vi. 22).

ANNOTATIONS:—Ver. 1. "*Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty,*" &c. Pride has its seat in the heart, is seen in the countenance, and expresses itself in outward actions; in every form and kind, the Psalmist repudiates it. It is said of Uziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 6) that his heart was high (Heb. ii. 4), "*Nor mine eyes lofty.*" The same expression occurs in a Davidic Psalm (xviii. 27). Compare Prov. xxx. 13—"Neither do I exercise myself." Lit., I do not walk,

my course of life does not lie in them; I have nothing to do with them. "*Great matters,*" See Jer. xlv. 5. "*Too high,*" Lit., too wonderful, the same word is used in Gen. xviii. 14; Deut. xvii. 8, xxx. 11.—*Dr. Young.*

Ver. 2:—"Surely I have behaved." Some render it levelled. Delitzsch renders it, "I have smoothed down and calmed my soul." "*And quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother,*" &c. "As the child that is fully weaned rests quietly on its mother's bosom, without yearning any longer for the breast, so the Psalmist's soul, weaned from passionate longing acquiesces in the dispensation of God."

ARGUMENT: This Psalm consists of two parts, a profession of a true humility (ver. 1, 2), and an exhortation to others to hope in God (ver. 3).

HOMILETICS:—This Psalm reveals in a striking way the *negative* and *positive* excellencies of true religion.

I. The **NEGATIVE** excellencies of true religion. What are they? First: Freedom from *superciliousness*. "*O, Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty, Neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.*"

The man who utters these words from self-deception, or what is worse from Pharasaic pride (and, alas! such

language has not been unfrequently used from such impulses), is in a state of spiritual blindness and unreality. But he to whose inner experience the words are a faithful expression, is freed from pride one of the greatest evils that afflict the soul. "*My heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty.*" The seat of pride, is the heart, and has its expression in the eyes, the supercilious look. True humility is not sycophancy nor self-depreciation. Secondly: Freedom from *restlessness*. "Neither do I exercise myself," &c. Ambition is ever restless, it has no inner quiet, it is always struggling for something it has not. Thirdly: Freedom from *worldliness*. "*I have behaved.*" The word, as I have intimated, means *levelled*. "*As a child that is weaned,*" &c. I have come down from the lofty heights of ambition and pride, all my ambitious impulses are smoothed down, the soul is calm. The world, with all its wealth and pomp is nothing to me, I am crucified unto the world. As the "*weaned child*" lies on the breast of its mother without fretting, satisfied with the fact that it has its mother, so I feel in relation to the world. I have no earthly cravings, I am satisfied with the presence and fellowship of God. Here is humility. It is beautifully described by Dr. Pusey thus, "The tree falls with any gust of wind when the root is near the surface, the house which has a shallow foundation is soon shaken. High and wide as the noblest trees spread, so deep and wide their roots are sunk below : the more majestic and noble a pile of buildings the deeper its foundation ; their height is seen, their lowliness is hidden ; the use of sinking them deep is not plain to sight, yet were they not thus lowly they could not be thus lofty. Dig deep, then, the founda-

tion of humility, so only mayest thou hope to reach the height of charity, for by humility alone canst thou reach that Rock which shall not be shaken, that is Christ. Founded by humility on that Rock, the storms of the world shall not shake thee, the torrent of evil custom shall not bear thee away, the empty winds of vanity shall not cast thee down. Founded deep on that Rock, thou mayest build day by day that tower whose top shall reach unto heaven, to the very presence of God, the sight of God, and shalt be able to finish it; for He shall raise thee thither, Who for thy sake abased Himself to us." The Psalm reveals—

II. The POSITIVE excellence of true religion. What is that? Eternal hope in God. "*Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever.*" What is it to hope in the Lord for ever? First: It is to have the soul fixed on the *supremely desirable* for ever. What is the *supremely desirable*? The Lord Himself. Love is never satisfied with the gifts of its object, however valuable, or with its passing visits. It craves for the object itself. You are never satisfied until you feel you can say that he whom you love is yours, he is mine. Hence the heart and flesh—the soul "cry out for the living God." To possess Him is to possess everything. "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" Secondly: It is to have the soul fixed on the *attainable* for ever. You may desire a thing, and yet not hope for it; before you can hope you must believe in its attainability. Is the Lord desirable? Aye, supremely so. Is He attainable? Undoubtedly. He comes within the reach of all that hunger and thirst after Him. Here then is excellence, eternal hope in the Lord. The soul in this state is secure and blessed now, and secure

and blessed for ever. And who may not have this hope? "From the lowest depth," says Carlyle, "there is a path to the loftiest height."

No. CLIII.

Religious Zeal and Religious Knowledge.

"LORD, REMEMBER DAVID AND ALL HIS AFFLICTIONS," &c. Ps. cxxxii. 1-18.

HISTORY:—Because verses 8 to 10 of this Psalm correspond exactly with the words which Solomon employed in his dedication service in the Temple (2 Chron. vi. 41, 42), it is not unreasonable to suppose that he is its author. And that it was composed by him on the occasion of the conveyance of the ark from the tabernacle, in which it was placed by David, to the newly-built Temple (2 Chron. v. 2). There is no certainty, however, as to the author or the occasion. Hence the diversity of opinion of Biblical scholars on the subject; nor does it much matter. It is the contents of a composition that give it importance. If it contains great practical truths and

inspiring suggestions, it scarcely matters whose hand held the pen, or for what occasion it was produced. Men and circumstances are as changing as the clouds, truths are as permanent as the stars.

ANNOTATIONS:—Ver. 1. "*Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions.*" "Remember Jahve to David, all the trouble endured by him." — *Delitzsch*. David undoubtedly had great troubles, most of which he brought upon himself, they came as the result of his sinfulness. The "*afflictions*" here point, perhaps, to the painful anxieties he had in making preparation for the erection of the temple.

Ver. 2-5:—"How he sware unto the Lord, and vowed unto

the mighty God of Jacob," &c. The second verse and the three succeeding — which must be taken together—are expressive of the author's opinion concerning David's anxious concern for the ark of the Lord.

Ver. 6:—"*Lo, we have heard of it at Ephratah, we found it in the fields of the wood,"* &c. "The words it may be of the people. Ephratah, or Ephrath, is a well-known title of Bethlehem, but we have no authority for saying that the ark was at Bethlehem. Some imagine the words to be a continuation of the words of David; *Lo!* we heard of the ark in our tender infancy at Ephratah or Bethlehem, and found it in the field of the wood, *i.e.*, at Kirjath—Jearim. No interpretation of the place is altogether satisfactory; the allusion may be to an incident not recorded." — *Canon Cooke*. It should be noted that these words are not supposed to be spoken by David, or Solomon, or any other individual; but by the people. "*Lo, we heard of it," "We found it," "We will worship."*

Ver. 8, 9, 10:—"*Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest, Thou, and the ark of Thy strength,"* &c.

These three verses are a repetition of 2 Chron. vi. 41, 42. But a similar cry was also raised in the wilderness when the ark was moved each morning for its rest at night (Numbers x. 35, 36).

Ver. 11, 12:—"*The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; He will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne,"* &c. "More, *lit.*, 'The Lord hath sworn to David, it is truth; He will not swerve,' &c. In the prayer at the dedication of the temple (1 Kings viii. 25) Jehovah is similarly reminded of his promise to David's line. The intense earnestness and solemnity of the words suggest the opinion that they were written whilst the line of David was still upon the throne, and not at a later time."—*The Students' Commentary*.

Ver. 13:—"*The Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation."* Zion is here used for the City of Jerusalem, and the verses following describe the blessings that would fall on it on account of its being made the permanent resting place of the ark.

Ver. 14:—"*This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I*

have desired it." The ark had never had a permanent resting place before, it had been carried about in the wilderness. For a short time it was left at Bethel (Jud. xx. 26, 27) then at Shiloh (Ps. lxxviii.; 60), then for twenty years at Kirjath-Jearim (1 Sam. vii. 2), then for three months in the house of Obed-Edom; but now at Jerusalem it was to have a permanent abode.

Ver. 15, 16 :—" *I will abundantly bless her provision, I will satisfy her poor with bread,*" &c. These words point to the blessings that would descend from heaven on Jerusalem, in consequence of its being made the permanent scene, and centre of divine worship.

Ver. 17 :—" *There will I make*

the horn of David to bud; I have ordained a lamp for my anointed." "*Horn*" is a symbol of dominion or power, and "*Lamp*" is a symbol of prosperity.

Ver. 18 :—" *His enemies will I clothe with shame, but upon himself shall his crown flourish.*" Whilst blessings from heaven are stated in the former verses to descend on all true worshippers in Jerusalem, confusion and shame shall be the fate of the profane and rebellious.

ARGUMENT :—The Psalm contains: (1) A commendation of David's zeal for the house of God (ver. 1-9). (2) A prayer that he may be rewarded by the fulfilment of the promise to him and his house (ver. 10-18).

HOMILETICS :—To *spiritualise* and *evangelise*, the Psalms is an easy and a popular work, but whether really an honest and useful work is another question. Our endeavour throughout has been to use them to illustrate principles that are true to human nature, and essential to the true spiritual culture of mankind. In this Psalm we discover two subjects worthy of remark, viz., *religious zeal* and *religious knowledge*. Here we have :—

I. RELIGIOUS ZEAL. The first ten verses glow and pulsate with religious zeal, the religious element in human nature run into passion. Three remarks are

here suggested in relation to the zeal here displayed ; it was ardent, misinterpreted and defective. First : It was *ardent*. It is here represented as burning with such ardour in the breast of David that it became to him actually "*afflictions*," and he vows to the Almighty not to go into his house nor to his bed, or to give sleep to his eyes or slumber to his eyelids, until he found a resting place for the ark, a habitation for the mighty God.

"Lord remember David.

And all his afflictions.

How he sware unto the Lord.

And vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob.

*Surely, I will not come into the tabernacle of
my house.*

Nor go up into my bed.

I will not give sleep to mine eyes,

Or slumber to mine eyelids.

Until I find out a place for the Lord,

An habitation for the mighty God of Jacob."

The religious element in David was stronger than the ethical. Hence, he could compose hymns and prayers with greater zest and readiness than discharge the duties he owed to his fellow men. Not only is it represented as thus ardent in the breast of David, but also in his countrymen, and contemporaries.

"Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah.

We found it in the fields of the wood.

We will go into his tabernacles.

We will worship at his footstool.

Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest,

Thou and the ark of Thy strength.

Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness.

And let Thy saints shout for joy.

For Thy servant David's sake.

Turn not away the face of Thine anointed."

"This "*we*" seemed also all aflame with religious zeal. They went in earnest quest for the ark, they found it in "*the fields of the wood,*" they resolved to "*go into his tabernacle,*" and "*worship at his foot-stool,*" &c. Our remark concerning the religious zeal, here, is Secondly : It was *misinterpreted*. It is regarded by the author of this Psalm (whoever he was) as something so *meritorious* as to claim the interposition of heaven.

" Lord remember David.

And all his afflictions."

" For Thy servant David's sake

Turn not away the face of Thine anointed."

Such a prayer as this is not only irrational, but impious. The best feelings and actions of all the best men that ever lived are utterly destitute of merit and constitute no claim to the interpositions of Divine mercy. "Think not to say within yourselves we have Abraham to our father," &c. Concerning this religious zeal, Thirdly : It was *defective*. Religious zeal is not necessarily a virtue ; it is, alas, often the reverse. It has often led to some of the greatest crimes inscribed on the long black roll of human wickedness. Although we predicate not that the religious zeal here displayed is utterly bad, we say it is very defective, and (1) Because it is confined to the mere *form of religion*. It has all to do with the ark, and the temple, and the priests and Zion. But none of these constitute religion or moral goodness. There is not a word here about the progress of spiritual morality, and soul homage to the

Infinite Father. Genuine religion is independent of arks and temples, priests and Zion. How much of what is called religious zeal is prevalent in these times ; zeal for chapels, for churches, for priests, for creeds, for rubrics, and for denominational organisations ! (2) Because it is confined to a mere *class* of *religionists*. All the zeal here seems to be confined to the children of Israel, especially to the seed of David. “*Turn not away the face of Thine anointed,*” that is the King. Whoever else is to be neglected, take care of him and his children too. A sectarian zeal this, and such zeal how common. Take care of our little societies, of our little sanctuaries, of our little priests, of our little hills of Zion. Sectarian zeal is, I trow, something worse than defective, it is essentially bad. Unless we love man as Christ loved man, our love is of little worth. Universality is an essential attribute of Christly love. His love embraced the race, irrespective of all distinctions, natural and conventional. Like the cerulean azure, it encompassed the world. I do not love man at all, unless I love as Christ loved, and He loved all. Here is :—

II. RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE. In the last seven verses there is a certain kind and amount of religious knowledge discoverable deserving our study. The author of the ode seems to have believed in three things.

First : That God has a *purpose in relation to individual man, the fulfilment of which depends upon the man himself.*

“*The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David,
He will not turn from it.*

Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.”

His purpose to David seemed to have been that his

posterity should occupy the throne of Israel, but then the fulfilment of this purpose depended upon their conduct. “*If thy children will keep my covenant,*” &c. Now God has a purpose in relation to every man, as well as to David, and the fulfilment of that purpose depends on man’s conduct. Every man that comes into the world is equipped with faculties, surrounded by circumstances, and placed in a sphere for a certain specific mission. If that mission is rightly discharged then a blessed destiny will crown his existence. Who will say that the Almighty Creator was more interested in David than in any of the millions He has sent, and is sending, into the world? Brother, there is a throne for thee, and a throne for thy children, if thou wilt act out the Divine purpose of thy being. The author seems to have believed, Secondly: *That God has certain methods, specially favourable to the meeting of man with Him.*

“*For the Lord has chosen Zion,
He hath desired it for His habitation.
This is my rest for ever,
There will I dwell, for I have desired it.*”

Zion was not the only place where men could meet with Him. The truly pious Israelite met with Him in every part of Judea. Job in the land of Uz as truly met with and worshipped God as David in Jerusalem. But Zion had some special advantages. There was the ark of the covenant, and there gleaned the Shekinah. What are the special methods? There is one above all others, which includes all others, that is *practical faith in Christ*. Here is the meeting-place, the true Zion of souls. The author seems to have believed, Thirdly: That He will show *Himself abundantly merciful to all those who will thus meet with Him.*

"I will abundantly bless her provision.

I will satisfy her poor with bread.

I will also clothe her priests with salvation,

And her saints shall shout aloud for joy," &c.

He will give them the provisions that shall satisfy, "bread," the clothing that shall save, "salvation," the best enjoyment, "shout aloud for joy," the best prosperity, "make the horn (power) of David to bud."

HOMILETIC GLANCES AT THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

[As our purpose in the treatment of this Gospel is purely the development, in the briefest and most suggestive form of Seimonian Outlines, we must refer our readers to the following works for all critical inquiries into the author and authorship of the book, and also for any minute criticisms on difficult clauses. The works we shall especially consult are:—"Introduction to New Testament," by Bleek; "Commentary on John," by Tholuck; "Commentary on John," by Hengstenberg; "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," by Westcott; "The Gospel History," by Ebrard; "Our Lord's Divinity," by Liddon; "St. John's Gospel," by Oosterzee; "Doctrine of the Person of Christ," by Dörner, Lange, Sears, Farrer, etc., etc.]

No. CLI.

The Moral Empire of Christ.

"JESUS ANSWERED, MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD: IF MY KINGDOM WERE OF THIS WORLD, THEN WOULD MY SERVANTS FIGHT, THAT I SHOULD NOT BE DELIVERED TO THE JEWS: BUT NOW IS MY KINGDOM NOT FROM HENCE. PILATE THEREFORE SAID UNTO HIM, ART THOU A KING THEN? JESUS ANSWERED, THOU SAYEST THAT I AM A KING. TO THIS END WAS I BORN, AND FOR THIS CAUSE CAME I INTO THE WORLD, THAT I SHOULD BEAR WITNESS UNTO THE TRUTH. EVERY ONE THAT IS OF THE TRUTH HEARETH MY VOICE."—(John xviii. 36-37).

EXPOSITION:—Ver. 36:—"Jesus answered." "These words are the reply of Jesus to the question of Pilate, "What

hast thou done?" "My kingdom is not of this world." Ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ. The "My" here is emphatic:—q. d.

This kingdom of Mine. He does not say it is not in or over, but, it is not of this world, ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, τούτου that is in its origin and nature, and so is no such kingdom as need give thee or thy master the least alarm." "If My kingdom were of this world then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." Were it an organism like the Roman Empire or other political governments, military force would be employed. The political kingdoms of men are established, sustained, and defended by force. Probably He here makes an allusion to the scene of His arrest in the garden which had just occurred, when He bade Peter, who was in the act of employing force for His defence, to put up the sword. "But now is My kingdom not from hence." As if He had said the fact is, it has neither its origin or support from the world. It has been remarked that the word "My" here is emphatic,

and occurs no less than four times in this one verse, thrice of His kingdom, and once of Himself. "My kingdom," "My servants," &c. It is in contradistinction to all worldly empires and ministries.

Ver. 37:—"Pilate therefore saith unto Him, Art Thou a king then?" I see no reason to believe that there is any sarcasm or contempt in this interrogatory; it is rather the expression of surprise and inquiry. "Jesus answered, thou sayest that I am a king." Or, "Thou sayest it because I am a king." "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." "To be king have I been born, and to be a king came I into the world, in order that I may bear witness unto the truth." "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." All, in all times and lands, of a truthful loving spirit, that shall hear My voice, shall recognise it as the response to all earnest inquiries.

HOMILETICS:—These words bring under our attention the *moral empire of Christ*, and there are three facts concerning it:—

I. It is SPIRITUAL IN ITS NATURE AND MINISTRIES. First: It is "*not of this world.*" This does not mean (1)

That *His empire should exert no influence on "this world."* This would be contrary alike to Christ's *teaching*, for He taught that His principles were the "leaven," the "salt," the "light" of the world. And contrary also to *fact*, for His system has modified the political institutions of the world. Nor does it mean, (2) That *His subjects have nothing to do with the political duties of the world.* He does not interdict His disciple from the office of magistrate, statesman, king. Nor does it mean (3) That *He Himself has no control over the kingdoms of the world.* "He is exalted far above all principalities and powers," &c. But it means that His kingdom is not like worldly kingdoms, built on compromise and force, and sustained in the same way. His empire was an empire over minds and hearts, over thoughts and feelings, and volitions. Secondly: It does not *employ violence.* "*If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight.*" Christ's language merely states the well-known *fact* of national wars, He does not *sanction* them. Christ's empire is not only foreign, but hostile, to all violence. He condemns the sword to the scabbard, His weapons are not carnal. His battles are fought, not against the lives and rights of men, but against their crimes and curses, against falsehood and oppression. Another fact concerning this moral empire of Christ is—

II. IT IS WON BY THE TRUTH, OF WHICH HE WAS A WITNESS. What do we mean by "*truth*?" Truth may be regarded in two aspects, as an *absolute reality*, and as a *relative experience*. As an *absolute reality*, its seat is in God Himself, it underlies the universe, the soul and substance of all, it is independent of all minds, yet that for which all minds naturally hunger and

thirst. "Where shall wisdom be found?" &c. As a *relative experience*, it is conformity in thought and speech and life to the absolute truth. The man who thus conforms to the great reality is "*of the truth*" is a true man. There is truth of *sentiment*, conformity of thought to the reality, there is truth of *speech*, conformity of language to the inner sentiment, there is truth of *life*, conformity of the man's character in all his thoughts, utterances and actions, to the eternal reality. In this form truth appeared in Christ, hence He is called "*the truth*." Two thoughts here are worth note, and are suggested. First: That *the world is under the rule of falsehood*. Men live in fictions, fallacies fill the atmosphere, the father of lies rules the world. Men live in a wilderness of phantoms. Observe, Secondly: *The grand object of Christ's mission was to bring man under the reign of reality*. "*To this end was I born*." Christ says His mission is to "*bear witness to the truth*," to shatter shams, to make men real. How directly was His teaching against the popular ideas and feelings of mankind concerning greatness, happiness, worship. He taught that happiness is not in what a man *has*, but what he *is*. He taught that greatness is not in *commanding* but in *serving*, that worship is not an occasional *service* but a *living spirit*. Thus He bore "*witness to the truth*." Thus He builds up His empire and explodes the reign of fiction. The other fact concerning this moral empire of Christ is—

III. IT HAS AMONGST ITS NUMBERS ONLY THE CHILDREN OF THE TRUTH. "*Every one that is of the truth, heareth My voice*." First: There are men "*of the truth*." Men to whom truth is everything, over whom fictions,

either social, theological, or religious, have no power. These men are the "salt of the earth." Secondly: These men "*of the truth*" recognise Christ's voice. He speaks to their common sense, their deep spiritual wants, and they respond to His call. Hence it was not from the conventional religionists and theologues that Christ won His disciples, it was from the unsophisticated people, the "common people heard Him gladly."

CONCLUSION:—Mark that none are subjects of this glorious and ever-growing empire of Christ but true men. It does not embrace charlatans, hypocrites, men of pretence or sham, but men practically loyal to the real. You are not to estimate their number by those enrolled in Church books, but by those who follow truth to whatever Calvaries it may conduct.

No. CLII.

A Powerful Vindication of Christ, a Reprehensible Treatment of Conscience, and a Scandalous Popular Election.

"PILATE SAITH UNTO HIM, WHAT IS TRUTH? AND WHEN HE HAD SAID THIS, HE WENT OUT AGAIN UNTO THE JEWS, AND SAITH UNTO THEM, I FIND IN HIM NO FAULT AT ALL. BUT YE HAVE A CUSTOM, THAT I SHOULD RELEASE UNTO YOU ONE AT THE PASSOVER: WILL YE THEREFORE THAT I RELEASE UNTO YOU THE KING OF THE JEWS? THEN CRIED THEY ALL AGAIN, SAYING, NOT THIS MAN, BUT BARABBAS. NOW BARABBAS WAS A ROBBER" (John xviii. 38-40).

EXPOSITION:—Ver. 38.—"*Pilate saith unto Him, What is truth?*" Lord Bacon and others see a jesting spirit in these words. "What is

truth? says jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer." Others see an earnest inquiry in these words. In his experience as

a Roman, and especially in his position as a judge, he had heard so many conflicting theories that he was unsettled and anxious concerning truth: and he asks, What is it? As if he had said, I shall be glad to know it. "*And when he had said this he went out.*" He does not seem to have waited for an answer to his question; a fact which gives plausibility to Lord Bacon's interpretation. "*He went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find no fault in him at all.*" What is meant is, I find no ground for the criminal charge of which you accuse Him.

Ver. 39, 40.—"*But ye have a custom that I should release unto you one at the Passover,*" &c. These words are immediately connected by John with those of verse 38, because the sending to Herod was preceded as well as followed (Luke xxiii. 4, 11) by a declaration of the innocence of Jesus. These two declarations might be blended in one. The very abridged account which John gives of the episode of Barabbas, serves as a link of connection between his narrative and that of the Synoptics. The origin of the custom referred to in

Pilate's offer is unknown. It is probable since the custom was connected with the feast of Passover, that it contained an allusion to the deliverance of the Jews from their Egyptian captivity. The words ἐν τῷ πάσχα at the Passover, by no means contain the proof as Lange, Hengstenberg, &c. allege; that the Passover feast was at that time celebrated. The 14th Nisan already formed part of the feast. It is even more probable that the deliverance of the prisoner took place on the 14th than on the 15th, that he might be able to take part in the Paschal feast with all the people. In making this offer to the Jews, Pilate counted on the popular sympathy for Jesus, which had appeared so remarkably on Palm-day. For it was to the entire people that the favour was granted, and Pilate knew perfectly well that it was from envy that the rulers wished the death of Jesus (Matt. xxvii. 18), and that the feeling of part of the people was against them. In the designation, "*King of the Jews,*" irony prevails as in verse 14. Only the sarcasm is not addressed to Jesus, for whom Pilate

from the beginning feels a growing interest and respect, but to the Jews. Their King? What! This, then, is the only rival whom this people with their national pretensions have to set up against Cæsar? But it is said in Mark xv. 11, "The chief priests moved the people that he should rather release unto them." The friends of Jesus remained mute, or their weak voices were drowned in those of the rulers and their creatures. Some resolute agitators imposed their will on the multitude. This is explained in John's πάντες all, which corresponds to Luke's *παμπληθει*. The *πάλιν*, *again*, the authenticity of which is established by the principal documents of both families, is remarkable. Thus far, in John's account the Jews, have uttered no exclamation. It was otherwise in the Synoptics (Comp. Mark xv. 8, ἀναβοήσας ὁ ὄχλος, and Luke xxiii. 5, 10). "They were the more fierce, saying . . . they vehemently accused Him." Here again John's narrative expressly assumes that of his predecessors — Ἀηστὴς does not always signify robber, but a violent man in general.

According to Mark and Luke, Barabbas had taken part in an insurrection in which a murder had been committed. The gravity of the choice made by the people is indicated by one of those short propositions whereby John describes a crisis of peculiar solemnity (Comp. xi. 35; xiii. 30). The name of the man who was set up along with Jesus, for the choice of the people admits of two etymologies. Barabbah, son of the father (either God or any Rabbi), or *Bar-rabban*, son of the Rabbin. In the first case we must double the *b*, in the second the *r*. The M.S.S. and Talmudic orthography favour the first etymology. The name is not infrequent in the Talmud. According to Mark's narrative there occurred at this point something like a rush of people demanding spontaneously the application of the custom, whereby a prisoner was released unto them; and Pilate sought to turn this incident to his purpose, the liberation of Jesus. In any case, whether this incident was suggested or simply turned to account by Pilate, thus to deliver Jesus was to commit a denial of justice. For He should have been

released as innocent. This		followed by a graver."—
first weakness was soon		Godet. *

HOMILETICS :—These verses present to us three subjects for solemn thought :—

I. A POWERFUL VINDICATION OF CHRIST. Pilate leaves the court in which he had earnestly and carefully examined Christ, stands before the assembled multitude and says, “ *I find in Him no fault at all.*” What stronger testimony could be given to the blameless character of Christ than this ? For, First : He had *ample means of knowing all about Christ.* Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea, the representative of Caesar. His position would enable him, and his duty would require him, to make himself acquainted with all the facts of a notorious character. There was no man for the last two or three years that had roused the popular mind more than Jesus. His name had been on the lips of all : all charges against Him would undoubtedly be brought under the notice of the procurator. This being so his testimony was founded on intelligence. Secondly : He had *every inducement to discover His faults if He had any.* He was a lover of popularity, and all the influential men over whom he ruled, as well as millions of the commonality, desired to convict Christ of crime in order that He might be put to death. If Pilate, therefore, declares His faultlessness, His non-criminality, who can justly allege any charge against Him ? Another subject for thought which these verses present to us is :—

* For a full treatment of Christ at Pilate's tribunal see my “Genius of the Gospel,” p. 684.

II. A REPREHENSIBLE TREATMENT OF CONSCIENCE.

Personally convinced as he was of Christ's innocence of the charge, what ought he to have done? To come out as a man before His accusers, denounce their wicked conduct and deliver Him. But what did he do? He tried to compromise the matter, and proposes to release Jesus, not on the ground of right, but on the ground of an old Roman custom. "*But ye have a custom that I should release unto you one at the Passover, will ye, therefore, that I release unto you the king of the Jews?*" O, Pilate! where is thy courage, where thy manhood? Instead of a man thou art a servile minion, controlled by outward circumstances, rather than by inward convictions. When men treat conscience thus: (1) They contract guilt. (2) They lose self-respect. (3) They endanger their souls. The other subject for thought which these verses present to us is—

III. A SCANDALOUS POPULAR ELECTION. "*Then cried they all again, not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.*" Who was this Barabbas? A notorious brigand, who was at this time in prison on account of sedition and murder. Now the question that Pilate submitted to the choice of the people was, which of the two should he release, set at freedom, to mingle amongst them. Hear their decision, their vote, "*Not this man, but Barabbas ;*" not the just, the pure, the tender, and the merciful, but the outrageously dishonest, the disgustingly foul, the morally malignant. Such was their choice, and such, alas, has ever been too often, and still is, the choice of the people; they prefer the blustering brigands to men of modesty and truth, brute force to moral power. "Who are the chosen of our race," says Dr. Archer Butler, "that

poetry crowns with its halo of glory and every young imagination bows to worship? Who but the laurelled Barabbases of history, the chartered robbers and homicides that stain its pages with blood, and that after 1,800 years of Christian discipline the world has not yet risen to discountenancing? Remove the conventional discredit that attaches to the weaker thief, exalt him to the majesty of the military despot, and how many would vote for Barabbas, how many linger with the lowly Jesus?" So long as the people are morally uneducated, and destitute of practical sympathy with the right, so long, *vox populi vox diaboli*, will continue to be true. Heaven deliver any country from the suffrage of a democracy, unconverted and unenlightened!

DOCTRINAL TRUTH.

I have found that if men have good natural dispositions, and a native principle of honour, those endowments commend their faith if it be true, and prevent it from being evil, if it be false; but that the actual operation of truth itself in remoulding the character, is exceedingly small. For the most part, seventy years of mere truth will effect as little change in a man, as seventy years of mere time will effect in granite.

JOHN WEBSTER HANCOCK, L.L.B.

BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

Partial truths everywhere form the beginnings of knowledge. In science, in philosophy, in theology, it is neither so much nor so often, that positively false doctrines are held, as defective ones. The difference between the intellectual conditions of childhood and maturity, and thus between their counterparts, the uncultivated and the cultivated mind, consists mainly in the ability to discern between what is less true, and what is more completely true.—
LEO H. GRINDON.

Sermonic Saplings.

THE MAN OF AN "EXCELLENT SPIRIT," OR OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE.

"THEN THIS DANIEL WAS PREFERRED ABOVE THE PRESIDENTS AND PRINCES, BECAUSE AN EXCELLENT SPIRIT WAS IN HIM; AND THE KING THOUGHT TO SET HIM OVER THE WHOLE REALM." *Daniel* vi. 3.



HE "*excellent spirit*" which was found in Daniel might be generically defined as a *good conscience*. A good conscience is in fact the essence and stamina of an "excellent spirit." All men have what we call a conscience; that is, a something within that concerns itself, not with the truth or falsehood of propositions, that is intellect, not with the advantages or disadvantages of conduct—that is prudence, but with the *right* and *wrong* of actions. But whilst all men have this conscience, alas! only a few have what Paul calls a "good conscience." A good conscience is something more than a *sincere* conscience. Many sincere consciences are bad consciences. Saul's conscience was sincere when he was breathing out slaughter against the Christians. "I verily thought within myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus," &c. The followers of the false prophet and heathens have sincere consciences, and no doubt many of the most

zealous and malignant persecutors have had sincere consciences. What, then, is a good conscience? It is a conscience that is *loyal evermore to the Divine will*, it is a conscience which, whilst ruling the entire man, soul and body, is ruled itself by the will of God.

Now looking at the whole of this chapter we learn certain facts concerning the man of a good conscience or “excellent spirit”—

I. That he is INFLEXIBLY HONEST IN ALL HIS WORLDLY TRANSACTIONS. In the fourth verse it is said, “Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom, but they could find none occasion nor fault, forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.”

The one hundred and twenty princes, whom Darius set over the kingdom were so envious of the power that Daniel had attained under this sovereign, that they flamed with a desire to find such fault with his conduct as would lead to his fall. Be it observed that all these princes were requested periodically to hand in their accounts to Daniel, and no doubt they found that Daniel would not tolerate any of their peculations and moral shortcomings. Like the chief priests and Pharisees in relation to Christ they met together in conference in order to detect some falsehood in his utterances, some flaw in his honesty and honour. But they failed. Of his whole life there was not a single item wrong. Now it is characteristic of a man who has this good conscience or “*excellent spirit*,” that he will be studiously truthful and upright in all his dealings with his fellow men. Whatever position he occupies—statesman, merchant, lawyer, artisan—he will be true as steel;

no swerving from his word, no temporisings, no attempt in any way to take advantage of others. Alas! there are men who are regarded as very religious, who sing psalms, make long prayers, and attend punctiliously to all the outward ordinances of religion, but who are utterly wanting in honesty of conduct toward their fellow men. They will cheat, lie, and catch at every opportunity to advance their own interest at the expense of others. But the religion of such is spurious and vain; where there is true loyalty to God, there will be honesty towards men. From the chapter we learn another lesson concerning a man of good conscience or "excellent spirit"—

II. That he OFTEN EVOKES THE ANTAGONISM OF CORRUPT MEN. The noble and upright conduct of Daniel so enraged the one hundred and twenty presidents and princes that they thirsted for his destruction. The light of his life revealed to the whole nation the meanness and corruption of theirs. And because of this their own peace of mind was disturbed, their social influence reduced, and their selfish plans thwarted. What led to the crucifixion of Christ but this? Christ's "excellent spirit" so raised the antagonism of His age that they could not tolerate Him amongst them. They rent the heavens with the cry, "Away with Him." This led, too, to the martyrdom of the apostles and genuine Christians of all times. So universal is this truth that Christ warned His disciples, saying, "Marvel not that the world hate you." "In the world ye shall have tribulation," and again, "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you," and "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake." We learn

again from this chapter concerning the man of good conscience or "excellent spirit"—

III. That he is INVINCIBLE IN HIS LOYALTY TO HEAVEN. When Daniel knew that the king had signed the "writing" and the "decree" which doomed him to the den of lions in obedience to the urgent demand of these envious presidents and princes, what did he do? Did he resolve that for the "thirty days" he would cease his religious duties? Not he. Read the tenth verse, "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house," &c. When he heard of the decree dooming him to the lion's den he might have striven to abscond, or he might have sought an interview with the king, might have expostulated with him on the ground of the unreasonableness and unrighteousness of the decree; or he might have ceased his religious devotions during the prohibited period. But no, with inflexible loyalty to heaven he went as other times into his house, entered the "chamber" where he was wont to pray, "opened his window" which looked toward Jerusalem, and there three times a day engaged in worship. Where this good conscience, this "excellent spirit" is, this will always be the case; no threatenings, no persecutions, even death itself will not turn the soul away from God. Thus it was with the three Hebrew youths. When Nebuchadnezzar commanded these three Jews to be thrown into the burning fiery furnace, what was their reply? "Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." So was it also with Peter and John who were commanded by the Sanhedrim with threats, "Not to speak at all in the name of Jesus," what reply did they

make ? “ Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye : for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard ” (Acts iv. 19). So with the Apostle Paul, when he was assured that bonds and prisons awaited him in every city on account of his loyalty to Christ, he replied “ None of these things move me ” (Acts xx. 24). So of Luther, when on his way to Worms he was told that there was so many cardinals and bishops at Worms, that they would burn him to ashes as they did John Huss, what did he say ? Then I will not go ? No, “ Although they should make a fire that should reach from Worms to Wittenburg, and that should flame up to heaven, in the Lord’s name I would pass through it.” And on another occasion his friend Spalatin sent to him, saying he must not think of entering Worms ; he looked steadily at the messenger and replied, “ Go tell your master, that even although there were as many devils at Worms as there are tiles upon the roofs of the houses, I would enter it.” We learn again from this chapter concerning the man of good conscience or “ excellent spirit ”—

IV.—THAT HE IS A DISTURBING FORCE TO THE SOUL OF HIS PERSECUTORS. After the king had signed the “ decree,” and caused Daniel to be cast into the den of lions, and had a stone laid upon the mouth of the den, and sealed that stone with “ his own signet and with the signet of his lords,” was he happy ? “ Then the king went to his palace and passed the night fasting ; neither were instruments of music brought before him, and his sleep went from him.” He felt that he had done a morally wrong thing, and his guilty conscience was lashed into a storm. When the conscience is in

this state the natural appetite for food is gone, there is fasting. The most delightful music has lost its charms and is offensive, and the soothing and refreshing angel of sleep spreads its pinions, and departs. Cain, Belshazzar, Judas, felt the agonies of a guilty conscience intolerable. But could not Darius pacify his guilty conscience by the plea that he was forced to do it? Forced by his princes, the leading men of his kingdom, and by the inexorable law of the Medes and the Persians? No, a guilty conscience would shriek in scorn at such excuses. Conscience would say, "You should have let your kingdom go, dared your presidents and your princes, and sacrificed your very life rather than do the wrong thing." That is evermore the voice of conscience. How do you think Herod felt, who was coerced by fear of the people to put John the Baptist to death? Do you think he slept that night of revelry when the bleeding head of that illustrious harbinger of the world's Redeemer was brought under his eye? I trow not. When a short time afterwards he heard of the doings of Jesus of Nazareth in the neighbourhood, his guilty conscience called up the murdered victim, and he exclaimed "This is John the Baptist." Do you think that Pilate, who was also overborne by the force of public sentiment to pass the sentence of death upon Jesus of Nazareth, slept that night? Even the dream of the act before it occurred broke the peace of his wife. "Have thou nothing to do with this just man, for I have suffered many things in a dream" &c. This king's misery that night is a testimony to the "excellent spirit," the good conscience that was in Daniel. Had he felt that Daniel deserved his fate would he have been thus disturbed? We learn from

this chapter concerning the man of good conscience or "excellent spirit."—

V. THAT HE IS EVERMORE IN THE SAFE-KEEPING OF HEAVEN. What became of Daniel in the lions' den? Was he torn to pieces, killed and devoured? Here is the answer, "Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste," &c. (See verses 19-23). "No manner of hurt was found upon him because he believed in his God." What prevented these wild beasts from gratifying their ravenous instincts and devouring this man? Some say his firm look kept the monsters at bay. Be it, as some say, that the steady look of a man in the eye of the most savage beasts of prey will subdue them, where is the man that can give this firm look, this fixed glance at the monster who is about to spring at him, and whose open jaws are about to devour him? The only man I know of is the man who has this "excellent spirit," this good conscience, in him. Such a man can look the devil himself in the face and not be afraid. Daniel ascribed his deliverance to an angel. May it not be that the angel was the invincible energy of his own good conscience, that it so radiated and flashed from him that the monsters skulked away? What better angel has God in His universe than a good conscience? This is heaven's guardian. "He that dwelleth in the secret places of the most high shall abide," &c. (See Psalm xci.) Peter with a good conscience "slept in prison between the soldiers, bound in chains." We learn from this chapter concerning the man of "excellent spirit" or good conscience,

VI. THAT HE IS SURE TO MEET WITH A RETRIBUTIVE VINDICATION. What became of the enemies of Daniel? Read

the 24th verse. They were put into the den of lions, they, their wives, and their children, and they were utterly destroyed. "With what measure ye mete it shall be meted to you again." "Curses, like chickens," it has been said, "come home to roost." Haman was hanged on the gallows that had been prepared for Mordecai. Examples are numerous of this retributive vindication. (See the "Retributive Justice of God," by Rev. J. Langley, M.A., published by Hatchards). We learn from this chapter concerning the man of good conscience or "excellent spirit."

VII. THAT HE IS THE BEST AGENT TO BRING THE WORLD TO TRUE WORSHIP. "Then king Darius wrote unto all people," &c. (verses 25 to 28). Professing Christians have set on foot many agencies for bringing the world to God, preachings, prayings, books, missionaries, but up to the present hour the comparative non-success is a matter for universal lamentation. The most effective agent—nay, that without which all other agencies must be futile—is the development in every day life of a good conscience, in the lives of all who profess Christianity. Men can stand against the most powerful appeals, both oral and written, but they must bow before the man who has this "excellent spirit" in him.

CONCLUSION :—Learn from this, First: *That the right thing is always the strongest thing.* What a power it gave Daniel, not only *outside* of him, over his enemies, over his king, and over the kingdom, but *inside* of him, over his fears, it made him as a lion. Right is might. What is called might where there is no right is like a huge tree whose enormous bulk and giant branches, and luxuriant foliage, are all gorgeously painted, decked with jewels and sparkling with

diamonds, but whose roots are rotten through and through. It cannot stand the tempest, it must fall and moulder to dust. Still more like the colossal image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, though its head was of gold its feet were of clay. Learn, Secondly : *That the right thing is always the expedient thing.* It might have seemed expedient to the world that Daniel should have ceased praying for at least thirty days, or that he should have ran away, or pleaded with the king, to get, if possible, his decree revoked. Not he. He pursued the path of rectitude, and see what he came to, and what he achieved. The policy of expediency which the governments of Europe—our own country included—have practised for centuries, has brought them to a period in which some of them are tottering at their foundations. Man is no judge of what is really expedient, but every man has the capacity for knowing what is right, “Why even of yourselves judge ye what is right.” Follow the right then.

A FAITHFUL PICTURE OF A TRUE GOSPEL PREACHER.

“AND I, BRETHREN, WHEN I CAME TO YOU, CAME NOT WITH EXCELLENCY OF SPEECH,” &c.—1 Cor. ii. 1-5.

THESE words may be regarded as a faithful picture of a true Gospel preacher—

I. The grand subject of his ministry is the CRUCIFIED CHRIST. First: Christ crucified, because He is the *highest revelation of God's love for man.* Secondly :

Christ crucified because He is the *most thrilling demonstration of the wickedness of humanity*. Thirdly : Christ crucified because He is the *grandest display of loyalty to moral rectitude*. This is the theme : a personal "Christ crucified," not a creed or creeds written in books. He Himself, not the theories of theologians about Him.

II. The grand subject of his ministry is TO HIM SOUL-ABSORBING. "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." The man who has some paramount sentiment looks at the universe, through it, *aye*, and values the universe so far as it reflects and honours that sentiment. Hence to Paul Christ was "all in all." All other subjects—political, and philosophical—dwindled into insignificance in its presence ; it swallowed up his great soul.

III. The grand subject of his ministry makes him INDIFFERENT TO ALL RHETORICAL CONSIDERATIONS. "I came not with excellency of speech." In order to exhibit this theme to men, he never thought of brilliant sentences and polished periods, and studied composition, not he. The theme was independent of it, infinitely too great for it. Does the splendid apple tree in full blossom require to be decorated with gaudy ribbons? Christ crucified is eloquence, mighty eloquence. Tell the story of His life in plain vernacular, with the notes of nature, however rough, and in vital sympathy with its spirit ; and your discourse will be a thousand times mightier than the orations with which Demosthenes shook the proud democracy of Greece.

IV. The grand subject of his ministry SUBDUES IN HIM ALL SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS. "I was with you in weakness

and in fear and in much trembling." This Paul was naturally a strong, intrepid soul, but in the presence of this grand theme he felt weak and trembling, "Who is sufficient for these things?" he exclaims. Vanity in any man is a vile and disgusting incongruity, but in a preacher it is a thousand times worse. A vain preacher is an anomaly, an impostor. He has failed to realise the grand theme about which he prates.

V. The grand subject of his ministry INVESTS HIM WITH DIVINE POWER OVER MAN. "My preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." There is as truly Divine power in the ministry of a true preacher as there is in the heaving of ocean or the rolling of planets; but a higher power withal, power over mind, it is "the power of God unto salvation."

"Would I describe a preacher
Such as Paul," &c. &c.—*Cowper*.

THE GOSPEL SCHOOL.

"BUT GOD HATH REVEALED THEM UNTO US BY HIS SPIRIT," &c.—1 *Cor.* ii. 10-16. *

BECAUSE man naturally craves for knowledge and deeply needs it, schools abound everywhere throughout the civilised world, especially here in England, schools of science, schools of philosophy, schools of art,

* For articles on verses 8, 9, see "Homilist," Vol. VI., p. 354.

SERMONIC SAPPLINGS.

&c. But there is *one* school that transcends all, the Gospel school. Three facts are suggested concerning this school.

I. That here the student is INSTRUCTED IN THE SUBLIMEST REALITIES. "*Deep things of God.*" *Things*, not words, not theories, "*deep things*," deep because undiscoverable by human reason, deep because they come from the fathomless ocean of Divine love. What are these deep things? The primary elements of the Gospel, and the necessary condition of soul restoration. These "*deep things*" we are here told are, First: The *free gifts of heaven*. "Freely given to us of God." Secondly: Freely given to be *communicated*. "*Which things also we speak*," &c. He who gets these things into his mind and heart, not only can communicate, but is bound to tell them to others, and that in plain natural language, free from the affectations of rhetoric, the language which the "Holy Ghost teacheth," language which is suggested by "*comparing spiritual blessings with spiritual.*" Men think in words, thoughts come dressed in their own language; the intellectual thoughts have their own language, and spiritual thoughts have a language all their own. Another fact suggested concerning this school is—

II. That here the student is TAUGHT BY THE GREATEST TEACHER. Who is the teacher? The Divine Spirit Himself, here called the "*Spirit of God*," and the "*Holy Ghost.*" First: This teacher *has infinite knowledge*. "*The Spirit searcheth all things.*" The word "*searcheth*" must not be taken I presume, in the sense of investigation, but rather in the sense of complete knowledge. In the last clause of the next verse it is said "*the things of God knoweth no man*, but the

Spirit of God." He knoweth those things of God, He knows them in their essence, number, issues, bearings, relations, &c. Secondly: This teacher *is no other than God Himself*. "What man knoweth the things of a man save the Spirit of God, which is in Him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God." The implication is that, this Spirit is as truly God as man's mind is mind. No one knows the things in man's mind but man himself, no one knows the "deep things of God" but God Himself. "Who teacheth like God?" He knows thoroughly the nature of the student, and how best to indoctrinate that nature with the "deep things of God." Another fact suggested concerning this school is—

III. That here the student MUST DEVELOPE HIS HIGHER NATURE. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto Him, neither can we know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Man has a threefold nature, designated by St. Paul as *soma*, *psyche*, and *pneuma*—body, soul and spirit. The first is the animal, the second is the mental, and the third, the moral or spiritual. This is the *conscience* with its intuitions and sympathies, and this is the chief part of man, nay, the man himself, the core of his being, that which Paul calls the inner man, the man of the man. Now this part of the man alone can receive the "things of the Spirit of God." Set these things before the "natural man," his mere body, they are no more to him than Euclid to a brute. Set them before the mere psychical or intellectual man, and what are they? Puzzles over which he will speculate, nay, they are "foolishness unto him." Sheer intellect cannot understand *love*, cannot appreciate *right*. It

concerns itself with the truth or falsehood of propositions, and the advantages and disadvantages of conduct, nothing more. Moral love only can interpret and feel the things of moral love, the "deep things of God." Hence this moral *pneuma*, this spiritual nature, this conscience must be roused from its dormancy, and become the ascendant nature before the "things of the Spirit" can be "discerned," and then the man shall judge all things, all spiritual things, whilst he himself will not be judged rightly by any "natural man." "*For who hath known the mind of the Lord?*" Who thus uninstructed can "know the mind of the Lord?"

GOD.—This word is spelt in four letters in almost every language ; namely, in Latin, *Deus* ; French, *Dieu* ; Greek, *θεός* ; German, *Gott* ; Scandinavian, *Odin* ; Swedish, *Codd* ; Hebrew, *Hdon* ; Syrian, *Adad* ; Persian, *Syra* ; Tartarian, *Idga* ; Spanish, *Dies* ; East Indian, *Esgi* or *Zeni* ; Turkish, *Addi* ; Egyptian, *Aumn* or *Zeut* ; Japanese, *Zain* ; Peruvian, *Lian* ; Wallachian, *Zene* ; Etrurian, *Chur* ; Irish, *Dieh* ; and in Arabian, *Alfa*. There is a beauty in the name appropriated by the Saxon nations to the Deity, unequalled, except by His most venerated Hebrew appellation—Jehovah. They call Him, which is, literally, The Good. The same word thus signifying the Deity and His most endearing qualities.

" The Great Name

In all its awful brevity, hath nought
 Unholy breeding in it, but doth bless
 Rather the tongue that utters it : for me
 I ask no higher office than to fling
 My spirit at Thy feet and cry Thy name
 God ! through eternity. The man who sees
 Irreverence in that name, must have been used
 To take that name in vain : and the same man
 Would see obscenity in pure white statues."

Festus.

Germes of Thought.

THE PREACHER'S FINGER-POST.

The importance of Spiritual Unity,

“ NOW I BESEECH YOU, BRETHREN, BY THE NAME OF OUR LORD,
&c.—1 *Cor.* i. 10-13.

HERE the apostle comes to the grand object of writing this letter: it was to put an end to that party spirit that had riven the Church at Corinth into conflicting divisions. His remarks on this subject continue to the fourth chapter and the twentieth verse. There are two things here which show the transcendent importance which he attached to *spiritual unity*: his solemn exhortation, and his earnest expostulation.

I. HIS SOLEMN EXHORTATION. “ Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye all speak

the same thing,” &c. What union does he seek? Not ecclesiastical union, conformity to the same system of worship. Not theological union, conformity to the same scheme of doctrine, such unions cannot touch hearts, cannot weld souls. They are the union of the various parts of the machine, not the union of the branches of a tree. First: The unity he seeks is that of *spiritual utterance*. “ That ye speak the same thing.” Not the same thing in letter, but in life. Let the utterances be as varied as all the notes in the gamut,

but let love, like the keynote tune them, into music. Secondly : The unity he seeks is that of *unity of soul*. "That ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." These include unity of the supreme sympathy and aim. Of such unity Christ alone is the centre. Creeds divide, Christ unites. According to the laws of mind all that love Christ supremely, though separated in person by distances immeasurable, are in one in heart, one as planets are one, revolving round the same centre. This is the union that Paul sought, this is Divine socialism. No wonder that he was solemn in his entreaties. "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," he asks it. Another thing which shows the importance Paul attached to spiritual unity is—

II. HIS EARNEST EXPOSTULATION. Divisions or schisms were rife and rampant in the Church at Corinth at this time. Some person of the name of Chloe, unknown to us, but evidently well known to Paul and his contemporaries of the Corinthian Church, brought these divisions under Paul's notice, told him of the contentions. We must, I suppose, assume that this Chloe was a good character, although as a rule the most unamiable persons are the most ready to parade the imperfections of others. Now what were the divisions against which he protests? "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ," &c. Their divisions consisted in rabid preferences for certain ministers. One party set up Paul as pre-eminent. Another party

set up Apollos as unapproached in excellence, others Cephas or Peter, and others gave Christ the pre-eminence, and they were right. Now to put down these divisions, these schisms, Paul expostulates with great vehemence. "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptised in the name of Paul?" Party spirit has been the greatest curse to Christianity, it has filled Christendom with conflicting sects. Alas! that any professed

minister of the Gospel should defend the existence of separate sects and Churches. How often have I heard them on platforms compare the different denominations to regiments in the same army. Do regiments in an army fight one with another, and do they misinterpret the grand purpose of the campaign? However, there are those who have vested interests in sects, live by denominations, and I fear nothing but the crash of doom will destroy them.

To Feel, to Be, and to Desire.

"PAUL CALLED TO BE AN APOSTLE" &c.—1 Cor. i. 1-3.

This salutation of Paul suggests what all ministers should feel, what all Christians should be, and what all men should desire.

I. WHAT ALL MINISTERS SHOULD FEEL. They should feel, First: That they have

a *call* to their mission. Paul did so. "Called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God." No man will do his work effectively in any sphere unless he is assured in his own mind that he is called to it, unless he feels it is his place. The inner evi-

dence of this call is *sympathy* with the work, and *aptitude* for it. They should feel—

Secondly: That their call is *Divine*. Paul felt called “through the will of God.” It is one thing to feel you have a call to a mission, and another thing to feel that call is Divine. The predominance of the sympathy and the pre-eminence of the aptitude will give this assurance. No man succeeds in any mission unless he feels called to it. The salutation of Paul suggests—

II. WHAT ALL MEN SHOULD BE. The description given of the persons addressed suggests what all men should be. What? First: *Religiously social*. They should be identified with a religious community. “The Church of God which is at Corinth.” All men should be in fellowship with the good, not iso-

lated. Secondly: *Consecrated to Christ*. “Sanctified in Christ Jesus.” Set apart to Him, devoted to Him, and thus “called to be saints.” Called to live holy lives. “In every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.” A reverent, conscious dependence on Him everywhere. Thirdly: *A catholic participation in Christ*. “Both theirs, and our’s.” There are these who feel that Christ is their special property, they would monopolise Him—an un-Christly feeling this. The feeling should be *our Christ*. “Our Father which art in heaven.” There is no personal Christianity that is not catholic in spirit. The salutation of Paul suggests—

III. WHAT ALL MANKIND SHOULD DESIRE. “Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father and

from our Lord Jesus Christ." In this we have the highest philanthropy, a philanthropy that desires for man, (1) The highest *good*. "Grace and peace." If men have

these they have all. (2) The highest good from the highest *source*. "God the Father." Men need this good, heaven only can bestow it.

Reflections for Churches.

"AND I, BRETHREN, COULD NOT SPEAK UNTO YOU AS UNTO SPIRITUAL," &c.—1 *Cor.* iii. 1 8.

In these verses are three subjects worthy of the profoundest contemplation of Christian ministers.

I.—The GRADUATING METHOD OF TEACHING. "And I, brethren, could not speak you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk," &c. Truth is to be administered with a practical regard to the receptive powers of the student, just as the administration of bodily food must have regard to the digestive capacities of those who

need it, "milk" for children, "meat" for men. This is Paul's metaphor; though men might live on milk, strong meat would kill children. There are truths in the Gospel of such an elevated character requiring so much intellect and culture to appreciate them that to enforce them on the attention of mental and moral children would be positively to injure them. Christ practised this method of teaching. He had many things to say which His disciples could not bear. Had He preached to them the

doctrines of the cross at first, they would have been shocked. When at one time they were merely intimated they produced a kind of revulsion in Peter, and he exclaimed, "That be far from Thee, Lord." This method of teaching shows, First : That a minister that may be useful to one class of men may be unprofitable to another. Secondly : The necessity of all who would enjoy the higher teaching to cultivate their mental and moral powers. Another subject worthy of attention is—

II. THE CARNALITY OF CHURCHISMS. "For where-as there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" &c. By churchisms I mean sectarianisms, denominationalisms, &c. What are churches? The best churches in Christendom to-day are but the organisation of cer-

tain opinions concerning Christ and His gospel. Some men extol one class of opinion more than another, and they set up one Church in opposition to another, and so on. Paul says this is "carnal." Carnal because it engrosses the soul: (1) In the *human* rather than the *divine*. (2) In the *personal* rather than in the *universal*. (3) In the *selfish* rather than in the *self-denying*. (4) In the *transitory* rather than in the *permanent*.* Another subject here is—

III. THE UNITY OF ALL TRUE MINISTERS. "Who, then, is Paul and who s Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed," &c. Again, "He that planteth and He that watereth are One." First: *One notwithstanding the diversity of talents, and kinds of labor*. Paul, Peter and Apollos differed in many personal respects; they differed in the kind and measure of

* See "Homilist," Vol. xlix., p. 1.

their faculties, in their temperaments and attainments; still they were one, in spirit and aim. Secondly: *One in grand practical aim.* What were they working for? The spiritual cultivation of mankind. One planting, another watering, &c. Different kinds of labor, but still one. Thirdly: *One in their connection*

with God. (1) Whilst all depended on God for success God gave the "increase." (2) All were co-workers with Him, "Laborers together with God." Fourthly: *One in their ultimate reward.* "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor." Each from the same God, each according to his work.

Seeds of Sermons on St. Paul's Epistle to Philippians.

Having gone through all the verses in the Epistle to the Ephesians (see "Homilist," Vol. xxii. to xxviii.), we proceed to develop, with our usual brevity, the precious germs of truth contained in this letter. The following remarks, as a standing introduction, may contribute some portion of light to the whole Epistle:—Notice (1) *The residence of the persons addressed.* Philippi—whose ancient name was Crenides—was a city of Macedonia, and called after the name of Philip of Macedon, because he rebuilt and fortified it, B.C. 358, and afterwards colonised by Julius Cæsar, who invested the population with the privilege of a Roman City. It was the first place in Europe where the Gospel was preached by Paul, an account of which we have in the sixteenth chapter of the Acts. It was during his second missionary tour, and about A.D. 53.—Notice (2) *The occasion of the Epistle.* The contributions which the Philippians had made towards supplying the Apostle's necessities when a prisoner at Rome, evidently prompted its production.—Notice (3) *The scene from which the Epistle was addressed.* That it was from Rome where he was a prisoner is clear, from chapters i. 1-13, iv. 22. It would seem from the Epistle that he was expecting a speedy decision of his case, and hoped to obtain his release. Epaphroditus had been despatched to him from the Philippian Church with pecuniary contributions for the Apostle's relief, and on his return the Apostle entrusted this letter for conveyance. This would be about A.D. 63.—Notice (4) *The general character of the Epistle.* It is all but free from any censure, and breathes a warm and generous feeling through every part. The Epistle gives us the impression that the Philippian Church was one of the most pure, consistent, and generous, of that age. About 40 or 50 years after this Epistle was written, we are informed that Ignatius, on his way to martyrdom passed through Philippi, and was most warmly received in that city.]

No. XII.

CHRISTLY LOVE.

"YEA, AND IF I BE OFFERED UPON THE SACRIFICE AND SERVICE OF YOUR FAITH, I JOY, AND REJOICE WITH YOU ALL. FOR THE SAME CAUSE ALSO DO YE JOY, AND REJOICE WITH ME."—*Phil.* ii. 17, 18.*

THERE are different kinds of love. Christly love is love in the highest form, the love which is the inspiration of all human activities, approved of God, and spiritually useful to man. Two remarks are here suggested concerning this love.

* For article on verses 14 to 16 see "Homilist," vol. xxii., p. 301.

I. It is SELF-CONSECRATING. It was so, First : In the *conduct of the Philippian Christians*. Paul speaks of their religion as the "sacrifice" and "service" of their "faith." The life of a genuine Christian is the life of a true priest, he is at once the *offering* and the *offerer*. It is a self-dedication to God. In this priesthood of personal Christianity—two things are to be observed: (1) Every man is his own *sacrifice*. The sacrifice of anything short of his own self will not do. The wealth of the world would not be a substitute for this. He must lay himself on the altar. It is not until he has done this that anything else that he can do has aught of virtue in it. What does this offering of self imply? (a) Not the loss of *personality*. Man does not lose himself by consecrating his existence to the Eternal. He will never be absorbed in the Infinite; a man once, a man for ever. (β) Not the loss of *free agency*. In the consecration man does not become the mere limb or machine of Omnipotence. In truth he only secures his highest liberty by yielding up himself to God. What does it mean then? It includes two things—yielding to His love as the inspiration of his being, and adopting His will as the rule of his activities. (2) Every man is his own *minister*—He must offer the sacrifice himself. No one can do it for him. Could my being be offered to the Almighty by another it would be a crime in the offerer, and no virtue to me. I must do it

fully, devoutly, manfully. It was self-consecrating, Secondly: In the *life of the Apostle*. "Yea and if I be offered (or poured forth) upon the sacrifice." The allusion is to the practice of pouring out libations or drink offerings over sacrifices both Jewish and heathen. Paul regards his own possible martyrdom in the sense of a libation. He felt that his possible death was to serve that practical Christianity which the Philippians were exemplifying in their "sacrifice" and "service." He had consecrated his existence to the furtherance of the gospel. Another remark suggested concerning this Christly love is—

II. It is JOY-INSPIRING. "I joy and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy and rejoice with me." This self-consecrating love to the cause of Divine benevolence, the cause of Christ and humanity is "joy." Such disinterested love is happiness, nothing else, is heaven and nothing else. Just as the individual man loses himself, his ego, in the love of God and the interests of His universe, all personal anxieties and sorrows sink into the depths of oblivion, the soul gets filled with all the fulness of God. Genuine religion is joy, it is not the means to heaven, it is heaven itself. Such is Christly love, and such alone is true religion. Selfish love, sectarian love, and theological love are not constituents, but antipathies, to this love.

No. XIII.

THE TRUE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIAN USEFULNESS.

"BUT I TRUST IN THE LORD," ETC.—*Phil. ii. 19-24.*

These words might be fairly employed to illustrate the true spirit of *Christian usefulness*, and the following remarks are suggested. This spirit is:—

I. SUPREME CONCERN FOR THE SOUL INTERESTS OF OTHERS. This was exemplified in Paul, First; *In thinking of them at all in his condition.* Paul was now a prisoner in Rome, exposed to martyrdom, "ready to be offered." One might have thought that in such a condition, his mind would have been wholly occupied with his own affairs, and that he would be utterly dead to the concerns of others. Not so, he feels a vital and deep interest in the Church at Philippi. Secondly: *In despatching to them the best man he could find to promote their spiritual good.* "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state." See what he says of this Timothy whom he purposes shortly to send to them. (1) He was the only man he could find of a similar mind to his own. "I have no man like minded, who may naturally care (or care, truly) for your state." It would not be difficult, perhaps, for him to find men who would go down to the Philippians and preach

to them; but very difficult to find a man who would visit them with that tender interest, and self-sacrificing love, which Paul had. (2) He was a man who was devoted to the things of Jesus Christ, and not to his own. "For all seek their own." This, perhaps, must be taken in a qualified sense, the "all," for most. The millions in every age seek their own, self is the centre and circumference of their aims and activities. Self is not only uncrucified, but in the ascendent. Few seek the "things of Jesus Christ," such things as *truth, benevolence, holiness, entire consecration* to the Divine will. The spirit of usefulness is devotion to the things of Christ. This concern is seen, Thirdly: *In despatching to them a man well known to them dear to him, as a son and a loving colleague.* "But ye know the proofs of him that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the Gospel." They knew Timotheus. He was with Paul when he first preached the Gospel to them (Acts xvi. 12-14). And also with Paul when he visited them, on another occasion; on his way to Jerusalem. He was with him as a "*son*," loving and loyal. Thus, Paul showed his absorbing interest in them. Why did he think of them at all? Above all, why did he send Timotheus, a man so dear to him, to minister to them? Why did he not keep him with him-

self, to soothe and succour him in his terrible position? It was because he had that spirit of Christian usefulness, that absorbed his whole nature in the concerns of others. With his liberty gone, and death before him, he says, I want to "know your state," how you think, feel, purpose, and act in relation to the Gospel which I preached unto you, the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, and for this purpose I send Timotheus to you, the most valuable man I know, and the most dear to me. So it is ever: a man, imbued with the true genius of spiritual usefulness, will think more about the moral concerns of others, than about himself. Elsewhere we hear our Apostle say, "I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen, according to the flesh, who are Israelites" (New Version). Ah me! Where is this spirit of usefulness now? Where are the men to whom their own personal and worldly interests are as dross to the welfare of souls? This spirit is—

III.—A SPIRIT OF SETTLED TRUST IN THE WILL OF THE GREAT MASTER. "Him (that is Timotheus), I hope to send to you presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord

that I also myself shall come shortly." Observe First: *He was in a state of uncertainty as to his destiny.* He did not know whether he should be liberated or martyred. The future of our personal existence is concealed from all, even from inspired men. "We know not what shall be on the morrow." Secondly: *Though in this state of uncertainty he entertained the hope of visiting them shortly.* "I hope I myself shall come shortly." This was natural. It not only implied a deliverance from his horrible position, but the gratification of renewing old and tender associations. Thirdly: This hope he entertained in *subjection to the divine will.* I do not know my future, but I trust in the Lord. "I do hope to visit you 'shortly,' I should like once more to be amongst you; I trust I shall, but my trust is in submission to the Divine will. Herein he acted according to the directions of St. James. "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will" (James iv. 16).

CONCLUSION.—Such is the spirit of Christian usefulness, a spirit that regards the soul interests of men as supreme, and that makes all hopes and calculations of the future subject to the Divine will.

Homiletical Breviaries.

No. CCCLXIII.

Two Classes of Gospel Hearers.

“FOR THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS IS TO THEM THAT PERISH FOOLISHNESS ; BUT UNTO US WHICH ARE SAVED IT IS THE POWER OF GOD. FOR IT IS WRITTEN, I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND WILL BRING TO NOTHING THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PRUDENT.”—1 Cor. i. 18, 19. *

Instead of the “preaching of the Cross,” the New Version reads, the “word of the Cross,” and the word of the cross stands in contrast to the word of worldly wisdom, and how great is the contrast! We have here two classes of Gospel hearers: I. The one is gradually PERISHING, the other is gradually BEING SAVED, The perishing and the saving are *gradual*. First: There is a class in every congregation, perhaps, gradually *perishing*. They are gradually losing moral sensibility—contracting fresh guilt, &c. They are not damned at once. Secondly: There is a class in every congregation, perhaps, gradually *being saved*. Salvation is not an instantaneous thing, as some suppose.† II. To the one class the Gospel is FOOLISHNESS, to the other the POWER OF GOD. (1) It is foolishness to them that are perishing, because it has no meaning, no reality. (2) It is a Divine power to them that are being saved. Enlightening, renovating, purifying, ennobling. The power of God stands in contrast with mere human philosophy and eloquence

No. CCCLXIV.

The Union of the Genuine Disciple with his Master.

“BUT OF HIM ARE YE IN CHRIST JESUS, WHO OF GOD IS MADE UNTO US WISDOM, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND SANCTIFICATION, AND REDEMPTION: THAT, ACCORDING AS IT IS WRITTEN, HE THAT GLORIETH, LET HIM GLORY IN THE LORD.”—1 Cor. i. 30, 31.‡

Concerning this union: I. It is MOST VITAL. “In Christ,” not merely in His dispensation in His school, in His character, but

* A sketch of verse 17 will found in “Homilist,” Vol. 47, p. 266.

† See “Homilist,” Vol. 49.

‡ Remarks on verses 20, see “Homilist,” Vol. XVIII., p. 101. On verses 22-26, Vol. II., p. 339; verses 27-29, p. 301.

in Himself, as the branches are in the vine, He is their life. II. It is DIVINELY FORMED. "Of Him are ye in Christ." Whom? Of God. It is the Eternal Spirit that brings the soul into vital connection with Christ. "My Father is the Husbandman." III. It is BLESSEDLY PRODUCTIVE. "Wisdom," "righteousness," "sanctification," and "redemption" come out of this union. What transcendent blessings are these. IV. It is EXULTINGLY ADORING. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." It inspires the highest worship, it causes the soul to triumph in God Himself.

No. CCCLXV.

Exemplary Gratitude and Precious Confidence.

"I THANK MY GOD ALWAYS ON YOUR BEHALF," &c.—1 Cor. i. 4-9.

Here we have two blessed states of mind—*exemplary gratitude* and *precious confidence*.

I. EXEMPLARY GRATITUDE. "I thank my God always on your behalf." The gratitude here was: First: *Unselfish*. "On your behalf." It is right and well to praise God for what He has done for us, but it is a higher and nobler thing to praise Him for what He has done for others. No man rightly appreciates a blessing who does not desire others to participate in it. The sublimity of a landscape is more than doubly enjoyed when one or more stand by your side to share your admiration. The gratitude here was: Secondly: *For spiritual good*. "For the grace of God." (1) That grace which "enriched in all utterance and in all knowledge." Two splendid gifts these, where they are inspired by the "grace of God," and properly related. "Utterance," apart from "knowledge," is worthless and pernicious, volubilities of vice, garrulousness of social evils. "Knowledge" is of no value to others, unless it has effective "utterance." Knowledge with a powerful natural oratory, will move the world, it has shivered dynasties, converted millions, and created churches. (2) That grace which confirmed in their experience the testimony of Christ. Their spiritual experience confirmed the testimony. What higher gift than this—a personal realisation of Christianity? (3) That grace which inspired them with a practical hope of the appearance of Christ. "Waiting for the coming of our Lord." This gratitude was: Thirdly: *An habitual state of*

mind. "I thank God always." It was not an occasional sentiment. It was a settled attitude of heart. Here we have: II. PRECIOUS CONFIDENCE. The apostle seems to have had confidence in three things in relation to Christ. First: In His *perfecting character*. "Who shall also confirm you unto the end." So perfecting it that it shall be "blameless." All moral imperfections removed. Secondly: In His *appearing again*. "In the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." The day—when He will appear. This day is the day of days for humanity. Thirdly: In His *granting them companionship*. "Unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ, the Lord." "Where I am there ye shall be also." Unshaken confidence in these things, how precious!

No. CCCLXVI.

Humanity the Temple of God.

"KNOW YE NOT THAT YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD, AND THAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLETH IN YOU? IF ANY MAN DEFILE THE TEMPLE OF GOD, HIM SHALL GOD DESTROY; FOR THE TEMPLE OF GOD IS HOLY, WHICH TEMPLE YE ARE."—1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.*

The apostle is writing not to those who were *spiritually perfect*; on the contrary, to those who were characterised by most salient moral defects. Yet he says, "Ye are the temple of God." Let us therefore, look at man—I. As a DIVINE "temple." "The temple of God." In what respect a temple? (1) It is a special *residence* of God. God is in all material objects, but He is especially in moral mind. (2) It is a special *manifestation* of God. God is seen everywhere in this world, but never so fully as in the mind of man. "We are all His offspring," and we are like the Father in essence, conscience, freedom. (3) It is a special *meeting place* with God. The temple at Jerusalem was God's *special* meeting place with man. "There will I commune with thee." Man can meet with God in material nature, but not so fully and consciously as in mind. "The highest study of mankind is man." Let us look at man—II. As a divine "temple" THAT

* For articles on verses 9, 10, see "Homilist," Vol. xvii., p. 342; verses 11-15, p. 146.

MIGHT BE DESTROYED. "If any man defile (destroy) the temple of God.' The destruction of a temple does not mean the destruction of all its parts, but the destruction of its *use*. Man might live for ever, and yet be destroyed as the temple of God, the special residence, manifestation and meeting place of God. Now mark this destruction, if it takes place, is not by God. He will not destroy the temple, but by *man*. "If any *man* defile (destroy) the temple." Alas! men are destroying this temple, *i.e.*, destroying their natures as the temple of God. An awful work this! Let us look at man—III. As a divine temple, the DESTROYER OF WHICH WILL BE DESTROYED BY GOD HIMSELF. "Him shall God destroy." Destroy, if not his existence, all that makes existence worth having, or even tolerable. "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." "The temple of God is holy," that is, *ideally* holy, ought to be holy.

No. CCCLXVII.

Worldly Wisdom.

"LET NO MAN DECEIVE HIMSELF. IF ANY MAN AMONG YOU SEEMETH TO BE WISE IN THIS WORLD, LET HIM BECOME A FOOL, THAT HE MAY BE WISE. FOR THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD IS FOOLISHNESS WITH GOD. FOR IT IS WRITTEN, HE TAKETH THE WISE IN THEIR OWN CRAFTINESS." —1 Cor. iii. 18, 19.

The wisdom here referred to is what Paul calls elsewhere "fleshly wisdom," the "wisdom of the world," or of *the age*. It is the same wisdom as he refers to in the first chapter, verse 20, of this epistle. The wisdom of this world may be regarded as mere intellectual knowledge, applied to secular and selfish ends; however vast and varied its attainments, it is worldly in the apostolic sense; it is "earthly," "sensual," "devilish," not like the "wisdom which is from above," which is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits." In relation to this wisdom, three remarks are here suggested.—I. It is SELF-DELUING. "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world," &c. First: This worldly wisdom deceives a man, inasmuch as it leads him to overrate the value of his *attainments*. He imagines that this kind

of knowledge, "wisdom," is everything for a man. Hence the enthusiastic promotion of secular schools and colleges. But all such knowledge is of no value to man as man, and beyond his brief and uncertain earthly life. He deceives himself in its value. Secondly: This worldly wisdom deceives a man, inasmuch as it leads him to overrate his own *importance*. He is "vainly puffed by his earthly mind," as Paul says elsewhere (Col. ii. 18). Such a man imagines himself to be very great, he becomes a priggish pedant, he "struts and stares and a' that." In relation to this wisdom, it is suggested—II. It is SPIRITUALLY WORTHLESS. A man with this worldly wisdom must "become a fool that he may be wise." Two things are here implied. First: That with all his wisdom he is already really a "fool." He is a "fool," for he looks for happiness where it is not to be found. Happiness does not spring from a man's brain, but from his heart; not from his ideas, but from his affections. Moreover, he is a "fool" because he practically ignores the chief good, which is love for, resemblance to, and fellowship with the great God. Hence God esteems this wisdom as foolishness. "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." The most illustrious scholar, sage, orator, who is considered by himself and by most of his contemporaries to be a man of wonderful wisdom, to the eye of God is a fool. In relation to this wisdom it is suggested—III. It is ULTIMATELY CONFOUNDING. "It is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." It must confound a man sooner or later either (1) *Here* in his *conversion*, or 2) *Yonder* in his *retribution*.

"Who are the wise?

They who have govern'd with a self-control
 Each wild and baneful passion of the soul—
 Curb'd the strong impulse of all-fierce desires—
 But kept alive affection's purer fires;
 They who have pass'd the labyrinth of life
 Without one hour of weakness or of strife,
 Prepar'd each change of fortune to endure,
 Humble, though rich, and dignified, though poor—
 Skill'd in the latent movements of the heart—
 Learn'd in the lore which nature can impart,
 Teaching the sweet philosophy aloud
 Which sees the 'silver lining' of the cloud
 Looking for good in all beneath the skies!—

These are the truly wise."—*Prince*.

The Preacher's Scrap Book.

DOMESTIC HEALTH.

[An Extract from the Address of Dr. Alfred Carpenter, given at the Health Congress in Brighton, December 17th, 1881].



R. CARPENTER pointed out not only the means that may be taken by all intelligent persons to keep households free from attacks of diseases of the zymotic type generated within their midst, but also the safe-guards which all may provide to lessen individual ill-health. In the first place he remarked upon the public indifference shown in regard to matters of public health; but the importance of having attention drawn to these matters was to be seen from the fact that 900 out of 1,000 children born in some streets of Liverpool died before they reached five years old, while if those children were removed to certain poor-law or charitable schools the mortality, under proper sanitary conditions, would fall to 15 in the 1,000. Living under sanitary conditions in Her Majesty's prisons, even lives picked out of the most disreputable and unhealthy classes were prolonged, and there was a power inherent even in persons born to hereditary disease, by a proper observance of Nature's laws, to throw off the effects of those diseases, and dwarf the consequences of their tendencies. Disease is a departure from the condition of the body called health; and there is a border line between health and disease, in which the condition necessary for the establishment of disease must have time to produce their results before the disease actually arose. Dr. Carpenter insisted that in this condition, people who were not well, but could not be pronounced ill, would be spared from passing the border line to sickness if they were under healthy home influences, for these influences would enable them to throw off their burdens in the conflict which was going on between sanitary and insanitary conditions. He described the classes of diseases arising from morbid poisons, which could reproduce themselves in the human body, which then became the manufactory of disease—producing particles as small pox, fevers,

diphtherias, *et id generis omne*, and he held that the conditions producing fatality in these, and other diseases of the like class, were of man's own creation. These conditions could be removed by man, for they were due to the changes which flowed from the natural result of the act of living. It would be as impossible for zymotic diseases to exist if all wastes were properly utilised in a reapplication to man's wants, as it would be for fish to live long without water. The very existence of zymotic diseases was an evidence that natural waste was retained somewhere in too close proximity to particular persons, who became subject to disease. The fatal error of cesspools had been abandoned, but all that was possible for safety was not done by sending wastes into sewers, as was proved by the destructive effects of sewer air upon the health of those employed in ill-drained public offices, and by the late death of Dean Stanley. The obituary in "The Times," would frequently show that well placed persons had been cut off in the prime of life by active disease, the consequence of impurity in the house till then little suspected. And this condition of things would not exist if constructors, such as engineers, understood the first principles of sanitary work. He proceeded to show that human wastes changed their character unless promptly and naturally dealt with by being given to the earth. He warned his hearers of the danger of cultivating disease, which was carried out in luxurious homes by dust-collecting carpets, curtains, cornices, and so-called architecture or upholstering ornaments, by which the *debris* of the skin and pulmonary membranes were retained. He warned his hearers that in over-heated churches and theatres the germs of disease were spread. Pure air, pure food, pure water, and temperate habits would diminish the amount of "pabulum" in which diseased germs could grow, and there would then be a diminishing amount of impurity in the blood of individuals. He impressed upon his hearers that blood, and the blood tissues of people become changed with unwholesome additions, and those who were freed from the unnatural conditions by acting in accordance with the principles of public hygiene, need not be, in the forcible words of the Psalmist, "afraid of the pestilence which walketh in darkness, nor of the destruction which wasteth at noonday."

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

THE LEISURE HOUR FOR 1881. THE SUNDAY AT HOME FOR 1881
The Religious Tract Society, 56, Paternoster Row.

These two serials are equal to their predecessors in variety of interesting matter and in the general tone. Of course, it has been impossible for us to make ourselves acquainted with each article and anecdote. We have, however, read the tale entitled "Misjudged; or, the Troubles of a City Man" in the *Leisure Hour*, from beginning to end, with considerable interest, and regard it as revealing genius of no common order on the part of the author, and recording incidents of great interest and practical significance. Some of the poems, too, are superior of their kind. The illustrations, also, which are numerous, are remarkably good. Some of the portraits, however—that, for instance, of the Emperor Alexander, are scarcely life-like. We see very little difference in the character and contents of these two volumes. It is true they differ in name, and that is nearly all. Both of them have tales, anecdotes, illustrations. True, *Sunday at Home* has short religious discourses, which are considered specially suitable for the Sunday. Why sermons should be more suitable for Sunday reading than for other days is a question not easily answered. Both are elegantly "got up," and deserve our hearty commendation.

EXCELSIOR. VOL. III. THE CHILD'S OWN MAGAZINE FOR 1881.
London: Sunday School Union, 56, Old Bailey.

Excelsior is a very handsome volume from the Sunday School Union, and abounds with interesting and instructive matter. It has tales, and poetry, and anecdotes in abundance. Its general

character is much like the "Leisure Hour" and "Sunday at Home," nor will it suffer in comparison with either. It is not, however, so large, and therefore, of course, is much lower in price. *The Child's Own Magazine* will scarcely fail to interest children. Its illustrations are beautiful, and very abounding, and it contains much pleasant reading for the little ones.

THE GIANT OF THE NORTH, OR POKINGS ROUND THE POLE. By R. M. BALLANTYNE. London: James Nisbet and Co., 21 Berners-street.

The numerous productions of this author are so well known and so highly appreciated, as to preclude the necessity, if not the impertinence, of characterising or recommending any book of his. We have only to state the fact that another literary offspring of Mr. Ballantyne's has made its appearance, and is light, interesting, and beautiful as any of the previous works.

HOSANNAS OF THE CHILDREN. By J. R. MACDUFF, D.D. James Nisbett and Co., 21 Berners-street.

Here are fifty-two sermons for children, and as the subjects are striking we will record a few: "The Children in the Temple and their Song—Am I one of the Children?—The Holy Child Jesus—The Shepherd and His little flock—A Happy Family gathering in the Patriarchal Days—A Sunset on the Hills of Canaan—The Lord's Supper—Light for the Traveller—Jesus Knocking at the Door—Boys and Girls playing in the streets of Jerusalem—Jacob's Well and the Well of Salvation—My Garden—Home, Sweet Home—What was Elijah like when he was young?—A Warning Bell—Jabez—Shall we meet again in Heaven?—Timothy—The Great Red Dragon—Justification—The Good News and the Far Country—A Bright Sunrise and a Gloomy Sunset—Heaven—A Harvest Sermon—The Pomegranates in the Garden—Take Heed—Words and Figures of Comfort—The Remembrance and the Vow—What you Sow you Reap—Three Links in a Golden Chain—The Lord's Remembrances and Going Through the Gates—The Children's City of Refuge—A still more Glorious City—The Death Bed of the Old Year." All these interesting subjects are treated with the wonted brightness and buoyancy of the author's style, and are beaming with a catholic Christianity. We heartily recommend this book.

A HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES. By the late DR. R. K. HAGENBACH. With an Introduction by E. H. PLUMIRE, D.D. VOL. III. CHRISTIAN ETHICS, SPECIAL PART. VOL. I. By DR. H. MARTENSEN. Translated from the German by WILLIAM AFFLECK, B.D. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 38, George-street.

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES. This is the third volume of a work of enormous learning and great research. It sketches the various theories of theologians that have been proclaimed as Christian from A.D. 70 down to the present day. Whether such multitudinous and often conflicting opinions are worth the study, and their knowledge of any great importance, is a question not easily settled. One thing is certain, that a drier subject, and one more truly distressing to the heart of those who believe that Christ, and not creeds is Christianity, and that the opinions of theologians are no more the Gospel than physiological science is life, could not be found. Albeit if acquaintance with them be of importance, it would be almost impossible to make that acquaintance better than by a thoughtful perusal of these volumes. Dictionaries of religious sects and doctrines are numerous and increasing, but this work supersedes the necessity of any more, it is so thorough, so comprehensive. The words of the learned editor agree with our own feelings regarding this work. "The first impression made on us by the study of the history of Jlogma in the Christian Church is, it may be freely admitted, disheartening and bewildering. We are almost tempted, as was the Master of Scoffing, of whom Bacon speaks (Rabelais) to label it, with a cynical despair, as "The Morris Dance of Heretics," each sect and party having a "diverse posture or cringe," and to feel that it is true not only of "atheists and profane persons," but of many earnest seekers after truth that, "when they hear of so many discordant and contrary opinions in religion, it doth avert them from the Church,"—yes, and not from the Church only—and "maketh them to sit down in the chair of the scorers." We ask, as we read the mild speculations of a Basilides or a Swedenborg, perhaps even as we enter into a more systematic teaching of an Augustine or an Aquinas—Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? It is well if we do not pass on to that other question which came from a jesting or a despairing Pilate—What is truth?"

CHRISTIAN ETHICS, by the Bishop of Seelan, is the first volume of

a work of intrinsic excellence, and likely to be of permanent value, The entire work will embrace a discussion of individual and social ethics. This volume is confined to the former, and consists of three general chapters, under which a large variety of subjects are discussed, "Life under the Law and Sin—Conversion and the New Life begun—Life in following Christ."

THE FIRESIDE ANNUAL FOR 1881. THE DAY OF DAYS FOR 1881.

HOME WORDS FOR THE HEART AND HEARTH FOR 1881.

TALKS WITH THE PEOPLE BY MEN OF MARK. Conducted by
REV. CHARLES BULLOCK, B.D. 7 Paternoster Buildings.

Here are three publications conducted by the same editor, and with the same purpose. THE FIRESIDE we consider in every way one of the best annuals of its kind. It has a vast variety of subjects and includes almost every topic in science, literature, biography, and religion. It has poems and anecdotes, and stories numerous and varied, and many of its contributors are of the first order. One of the tales we have read, namely, "Benvenuta," and our interest was not only kept up throughout, but heightened on to the conclusion. The discourse of the editor on "Temperance" is admirable. The book has much rare information on many subjects, and the spirit of the whole has a tendency to righteousness. THE DAY OF DAYS, conducted by the same editor, is meant especially for Sunday reading, and cannot fail to be useful. HOME WORDS, another work of the same class, and under the same editorship, is attractive, not merely on account of its articles, but also on account of the portraits of clergymen and brief sketches of their lives. "TALKS WITH THE PEOPLE" refers to one of the grandest men of any time or age, a moral cedar in the forest of the race, towering high above most, the late President Garfield. Some of the sentences here recorded from his speeches and writings, are rays from a solar soul. There is a portrait given of this great man, but we have an impression that it must be more of a caricature than a likeness. The portrait of Mr. Forster in "Fireside," and the portrait here of President Garfield are certainly not good. The latter is too ugly and the former is not ugly enough.

LITTLE FOLKS FOR 1881. London: Cassell, Petter and Galpin, Ludgate Hill.

This volume of "Little Folks" is one of the best of the kind. It

has almost everything in it to interest children: pictures, tales, anecdotes, music, poetry, puzzles, and most exquisite illustrations. It breathes throughout a high moral tone.

MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF THOMAS CARLYLE.
 Edited by RICHARD HERNE SHEPHERD, assisted by CHARLES
 WILLIAMSON. In two volumes. London: W. H. Allen & Co.,
 13, Waterloo Place.

These memoirs contain also Personal Recollections and Selections from his private letters to numerous correspondents. "A large proportion," says the author, "of the materials for which a framework is here provided had been collected and arranged gradually during the last twenty years of Mr. Carlyle's lifetime. For more than half that period the editor has contemplated the production of such a biography as that now in the reader's hands. He is happy to have been able to achieve his self-appointed task, and he trusts that his labours have not been altogether in vain." In a biography of such a man as Thomas Carlyle we do not want the biographer to give his own opinions concerning him, whether favourable or unfavourable; nor even the opinions of others, however just or unjust, extolling or condemnatory. All we want is for him to give us the hero himself. But few men who have really studied Carlyle's books, even with ordinary attention, have not revolted with ineffable disgust at the criticisms of newspaper and magazine scribblers. He had faults, and let his faults appear with his excellencies, they are only shadows in the background of his life-picture; he appears to rise more majestically through the black clouds that seem to hover round him. Mr. Shepherd has done just what we want, given us Carlyle himself as he appeared in his letters, his books, his conversations, and his daily habitudes. We predict for these admirable volumes an immense circulation.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO A NEW REVISION; OR, A CRITICAL COMPANION TO
 THE NEW TESTAMENT. By ROBERT YOUNG, L.L.D. Edinburgh:
 G. A. Young and Co.

The learned author of this invaluable little work informs us in his preface that for many years, long before the New Version of the Testament was contemplated, he was deeply impressed with the

imperfections of the Version of 1611; and that with a view of lessening the inconsistencies he discovered, he sat down to the task to try and reduce the inconsistency to a minimum: and "with a Greek Concordance and an English Testament before him, he began his work, fixing on one or two of the more exact renderings of the English Version under each original word, and then substituting these in all places where they would fit with any degree of propriety. Though this involved 100,000 references, it was in due time accomplished." He contemplated all the while the publishing of his notes, but when he heard of a forthcoming Revised Version he halted, hoping that Version would supply all that was required. Instead of which he states that he has noted down upwards of 500 cases where the imperfect tense in Greek has been neglected by the Revisers of 1881. It seems to be a growing impression among scholars that in consequence of the imperfections of this New Version another is demanded. This work of Dr. Young's is therefore almost a necessity, it should go side by side with the New Version.

THE CAMBRIDGE BIBLE FOR SCHOOLS. ECCLESIASTES. By E. H. PLUMTRE, D.D. Cambridge University Press.

This is a book of rare worth on one of the most strange and difficult tracts contained in the Bible. He who reads the masterly introduction to this volume by the learned author, and his remarks on the various verses of the book, will feel that this book of Ecclesiastes is a new thing to him, a thing of grandeur and Divine significance. We recommend our ministerial readers to possess themselves of a copy at once; their libraries would be incomplete without it.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES. By REV. PRINCIPAL DOUGLAS, D.D. Edinburgh: P. & P. Clark.

We are glad to receive another of these invaluable handbooks for Bible Classes. This on Judges seems to us to be equal to any of its predecessors, which we have from time to time strongly recommended. The Book of Judges is one of thrilling interest, and some of its facts are stirring as romance itself, and one as enigmatic as to challenge resolute intellectual effort. Dr. Douglas has, we think, done his work well.



Leading Homily.

THE ILLUSTRIOUS DEAD OF 1881.*

“THE GRASS WITHERETH, THE FLOWER FADETH.”—*Isaiah* xl. 8.

“THE FLOWER FALLETH.”—*1 Peter* i. 25.

WHAT more fitting cry can escape our lips as we bend over the grave of another year? For if, as the prophet says, “Surely the people is grass, and the goodliness thereof is but as the flower,” we have seen only too vividly throughout the year that ended yesterday, that the grass—the people—wither, and that the flowers—the famous and the beautiful—fade and fall.

The scythe of time mows down with undeviating regularity, year by year, about an equal quantity of human grass. The striking phenomenon of the annual average of deaths must often have startled and baffled the more thoughtful among you. Whatever

* Being the tenth annual sermon preached at Redland Park Church on the Dead of the Preceding Year.

happens, in the way of Epidemic, Accident, or War, to increase some columns in the table of mortality, the total maintains a yearly average, as though, forsooth, Death plied his devastating calling with mathematical precision and punctuality. But I have not found any similar average, as, year by year, I have sought, for your sakes, to number the more prominent of the illustrious dead. Though an average of common "grass" withers, it often happens that the "flowers" that fade and fall are few and comparatively poor, whilst sometimes, alas, they are numerous and notable.

During last year the wide field of human life, as far as I am able to scan it, lost a far greater number of its conspicuous and beautiful flowers, than in any preceding twelvemonth I can recall.

To not a few here the flowers that have faded during the year must mean, first of all, the tenderly endeared and for ever beloved ones of their own hearts and homes. But though they are in the thoughts and affections of many of you—and some of them enshrined in my thoughts and affections too—they are not our theme to-night. All we are able to look at to-night were *conspicuous*, some were *beautiful* as well. There was many a royal rose, if there was here and there a haughty sunflower. There were men whose doings and reputations dazzled the eyes of nations; there were others, the moral loveliness and fragrance of whose characters will for ever live in the memories of humanity. The relentless Reaper has cut them all down, and now in the solemn and thoughtful mood that well becomes such a task, we set ourselves to enumerate the Illustrious Dead of 1881.

" Call them from the dead,
 For our eyes to see !
Prophets, bards, whose awful word
 Shook the earth,—' Thus saith the Lord '—
 And made the idols flee ;—
 A glorious company !
 Call them from the dead,
 For our eyes to see !
Sons of wisdom, song, and power,
 Giving earth her richest dower,
 And making nations free ;—
 A glorious company !
 Call them from the dead,
 For our eyes to see !
Forms of beauty, love, and grace,
 Sunshine in the shady place.
 That made it life to be ;—
 A blessed company !
 Call them from the dead !—
 VAIN the call will be :
 But the hand of death shall lay,
 Like that of Christ, its healing clay
 On eyes, which *then* shall see
 That glorious company."

Perhaps it is natural to begin our numbering of the dead among the *thrones* of men ; and from that comparatively small circle we miss two of the most conspicuous figures of our times—the President of the United States, and the Emperor of all the Russians. Each of these was, when this year dawned, the ruler of one of the vastest of modern empires ; the body of each is to-day but so much of the common dust which Mother Earth gathers to her bosom, as the mortal remains of the poorest as of the proudest of men. While one was the representative of a young constitution, that seeks to incarnate the genius of *Liberty* ; and the other the

representative of one of the old world *Despotisms*; each met with his death from the assassin's hand. Strangely linked together, thus, in the recitals of history, are this American uncrowned king, and this hereditary Russian autocrat. Yet they stand wide asunder as MEN.

James Abraham Garfield had but little fame in Europe till he was elected President of the great Western Republic. And, if, till his decease, he was not as widely and as clearly known as most men in his position are, his immortal death did the greater things for him, for us, and for his own people. As from the infinitely wondrous death of Him who died on Calvary, the life of "one king Jesus" gathered its sublimest interest,—and, as by the healing touch of the hand of that same death, man is being reconciled to man, and man to God; so this death gave a rich lustre to a noble life, and quickened and deepened sympathies between all classes in the American Commonwealth, and between us and our brethren beyond the Atlantic. It is scarcely too much to say, that the civilized world gathered round his death-bed—and *what* a death-bed! His long struggle of eighty days with death—a struggle which was splendidly heroic in its gallant courage, its unselfish patience, its simple piety—was a fitting act as closing the drama of his life. For, as we have tracked the steps by which the boy labourer of the farm advanced to the President's seat of the mightiest Republic the world has yet known, we must have marked all through the same *courage*, the same unselfish *patience*, the same *piety* that flowered in unsurpassed beauty on his dying pillow. There were gathered up in his character, the sturdy *manhood*, the

ripe *scholarship*, the consummate *genius for ruling*, that (being consecrated, as they were, by the love of home, of man, of country, and of God) leave him with but few rivals, and no superiors among the monarchs of great peoples. Moreover he was a *martyr* monarch, for his invincible determination that public debts should be paid, and that there should be no corruption connected with the obtaining or holding of offices of state, marked him as the victim of the base and the mercenary. Hence the shot of the assassin, who now feigns madness to escape what is—if ever death can be—the just doom of his hellish act. For many a day, England will mourn with America the tragic death of her martyr President Garfield; as for a man of fine make *physically*, equally fine *mentally* and *morally*,—as for a man of rare *gentleness* and *humour*, and *shrewdness*, and *strength*—as for a man who, like our own Prince Albert, “wore the white flower of a blameless life.”

When on March 13th, the news of the assassination of *Alexander II. of Russia* startled Europe, men's minds were stunned, their indignation at cold blooded cruelty was aroused, and the thrones of many nations were shaken, but there was no laceration of multitudes of hearts, as when Garfield was shot. For, though the Czar had two sides to his character (and the better side is at its meridian in his emancipation of twenty-three millions of serfs), he was the hereditary embodiment of one of those iron despotisms of which the world has grown weary. Probably he was not personally responsible for much of the tyranny and cruelty and administrative corruption associated with his name. But as he had the pomp, so he had the penalty of

autocracy. The Nihilists in all their deep set and far spread conspiracies, and emphatically in their bloody deed of violence on the fatal Sunday that ended Alexander's life, were but uttering in exaggerated, and indeed, in wild, and mad, and wicked cries, the demand of the people for the liberty out of which they have been too long cheated, or crushed by potentates. Had the Emperor been less of the mere hereditary ruler, less of the gloomy hypochondriac, he might have heard and profited by the many voiced conviction of our age, that, rolling through the nations like an undertone of subdued but growing thunder, declares that—

“Though specious tyranny be strong,
Humanity is true ;
And empire based upon a wrong,
Is rotten through and through.”

With us, in England, the *Prime Minister* holds a place of power only second to that of a monarch elsewhere. And, in the year when Russia and the United States have had to bewail the loss of rulers, we had to miss, as it were, from the steps of the throne, one who had been—and might have been again—one of the most remarkable Premiers of our time. While *Lord Beaconsfield* lived, one great political party claimed him for its illustrious champion, and another contended with him as its most distinguished foe. But over his quiet grave in Hughenden churchyard all party politics were hushed : and so they must ever be if a fair estimate is to be formed of a political leader. He himself was a great romancer, and he not simply wrote romance, his life itself was a romance. How much of it was for good, and how much for evil, another generation than ours will most satisfactorily decide. We may all

recall with enthusiasm the intrepid persistency of the young member in the House of Commons, who, failing to win a hearing in his first speech, in the moment of of failure sat down with the assertion—prophecy it turned out to be—"The time will come when you will want to hear me;" and who, years before his death, had won not only the breathless attention of whichever House of Parliament he was addressing, but had become as great a power in international councils as any of the crowned heads of Europe. His penetrative intellect, his ceaseless industry, his influential eloquence, were but some of the explanations of his brilliantly successful life. His name has no more lasting laurel than the consistent courage with which he upheld the cause of the Jews, that great and unique people, whom till too lately, England, as well as all the countries of Europe, has cruelly wronged and bitterly persecuted. But did he make any profession of, or can we find any sure indication of a *lofty moral aim*, as the great purpose of his life? And *what* in the work of the novelist, *what* in the aims of the Statesman are to be enforced as an example to others, unless it be genuine *reality*, unswerving *fidelity*, Christly *unselfishness*, whereas the attractive glow with which in his novels he suffuses social hollowness, and the glamour which his speeches and his policy threw around lust for power, and even over war itself, are two of the perilous legacies he has bequeathed to society and the State. England may well be on her guard against the usual temptations of a wealthy and powerful nation; the materialistic temptations to think much of luxury and pomp at home, and of military prowess abroad. For will it not mean hopeless and deserved ruin to us, if the heart of Eng-

land is ever weaned from its old love of simplicity, of progress, and of peace? And so the ideal statesman must surely be the man who, not misled by the caprices of the frequenters of the gilded saloons of riches or rank, or by the clamours of military circles, holds fast as a maxim in all his lofty cares for England's interest, at home and abroad, the simple axiom, "That in every country the nation dwells in the cottage."

The other figures in the political arena that have been called away by death during the year are scarcely to be mentioned in the same breath as Lord Beaconsfield. Yet many of them were prominent and useful men. There was *W. P. Adam*, who when, in May, he died, had been but a few months Governor of Madras. He had assumed that coveted and responsible post with much promise of a useful career. For he had not only filled with skill and judgment important political offices at home, but had won a high Indian reputation as private secretary to Lord Elphinstone, in his governorship of Bombay.

There was *Sir Charles Reed*, who, though he was a Member of Parliament, and had shown eager interest in many philanthropic and religious enterprises, will be chiefly remembered as the Chairman of the London School Board, to the important work of which he gave himself with that unreserved consecration, which is the glory of the *gratuitous service* of so many of our public men. Of the difficulties that beset the working of that, and similar School Boards, I do not linger to say more than that they tax to the utmost the diligence, the patience, the many-sided wisdom of those who lead their affairs. To those who believe that education is the birthright of every English child, and

must be a boon to the entire State, it will be a matter calling for honour to human workers, and for thanksgiving to Almighty God, that the number of school places in London almost doubled, and the average attendance considerably more than doubled, while Charles Reed was a member of the Board.

And in reminding you further of those who are missed from Parliament, whilst there are several others whose names occur to you, such as *Heathcote* of Oxford, *Egerton* of Cheshire, *Massey* of Tiverton, and *Macdonald* of Stafford—mention must be made of *Mr. Powell*, whose weird end in his balloon adventure of last month stirred almost a nation's pity.

From the circle that is, as it were, but just outside Parliament, some conspicuous men of thought and action have disappeared. One was *Edward Miall*, once indeed M. P. for Bradford, but best known as an able, persevering, and religious man, who, from his early life down to the three score and tenth year, which he had just passed when he died, gave the main part of his powers and of his time to promulgate the conviction that the Church of Christ should not be controlled by, or endowed by the State. Whatever bitter words have been uttered on either side in this controversy, or whatever unbrotherly spirit has been stirred, is a matter for regret, for shame, and for repentance. Of two things there can be no doubt—one, that on either side are to be found men moved by lofty, disinterested, and religious purpose, and the *other* that since he first threw himself into the propaganda, by the press and on the platform, of the principle he cherished, very great accessions have been made to the numbers who hold it. For now it is no longer a Nonconforming as distinct

from a Churchman's belief, that the Church should be independent of the State. Quite a multitude of Churchmen agree with Nonconformists in desiring the day in which every form of disability because of religious conviction shall be abolished, and a voluntarily supported and self-governed Church shall be, not in any mere official sense the Church of the nation, but truly and gloriously the Church of *Christ* for the nation.

Another of the men who have had much to do with forming and expressing public opinion outside Parliament was *Mr. Edmond Beales*, who died at the ripe age of seventy-six, filling at that time the office of a County Court Judge. But some sixteen or seventeen years ago, his name had a national prominence, and was about equally abused and praised as that of the President of the Reform League, whose agitations led to the passing of the last Reform Bill. He was at the head of many thousands who were resolved on claiming their right to the suffrage, and it was well he was at their head. For there is always great peril in the tumultuous spirit that possesses vast crowds of earnest men, as these multitudes in London were then possessed. His commanding presence and fine elocution, his culture as a barrister, his sober piety as a devout evangelical Churchman, his courage as a man, enabled him so to pilot that successful movement, that it avoided the quicksands and reefs of Sunday desecration and of lawless violence. Working men, who read history aright, will find, again and again, that the true *pioneers* of reform have been *men of religion*. For electoral rights, for the cheap loaf, for the emancipated slave, for national education, we have to thank, not the reckless and profane among Secularists, or indeed

Secularists at all, but God-fearing and Christ-serving men.

Whilst we have to record, as among the dead of the year, the names of English politicians and political reformers, France also has her list to recite. On the first day of the year, *M. Blanqui* died, having spent nearly half his life of seventy-six years in prison, for Communistic and other revolutionary offences. For in all the convulsions which have torn that great country, which has been so long and so severely afflicted with social and political fits, he played a vigorous part. Once he was sentenced to death, once he was banished, and even when this stormy petrel passed away altogether, it was during his release from prison under a pardon which was granted out of pity for an old and helpless man.

Almost parallel in lifetime, and of about the same age, when, in April, he died, was *Emile de Girardin*. He was pre-eminently a journalist, and wielded with much force the great influence the press in every civilised country puts in the hands of its editors. Now we find him furthering Louis Napoleon's election to the Presidency, and anon fiercely and righteously opposing the moral and physical atrocities of that blood-stained ruler's *coup d'état*. His chief achievements that ought to be recorded with national gratitude are the reduction of postage in France, and the promotion of the Paris Exhibition of 1878.

To return again to England.

The *Legal Profession* has lost at least four very distinguished exponents of the majesty and mystery of English Law. Three of them were judges, and it goes without saying that the fourth would certainly have

been, but for the shattered health he suffered for many years before his death.

Ex-Lord Chancellor Hatherley was, by universal consent, an almost ideal judge. His personal character was so blameless, his legal aptitudes were so rich, his judgments were so just, that whether he were Vice-Chancellor in the Court of Chancery, Lord Justice of Appeal, or, as he subsequently was, till his eyesight failed him, Lord Chancellor of England, he produced everywhere the exact impression a judge ought to make. It is very instructive to link his reputation for perfect truthfulness, candour, and goodness, with the fact of his devoted work in Westminster as a Sunday-school teacher. Men not a tithe so cultured as he, seem to think themselves too *wise*, and men not half so burdened with multifarious cares as he, think themselves far too *busy* to throw themselves into a work that young England needs to-day more than ever. Not that we would give the impression that mere station can lend dignity to the function of teaching children the religion of Jesus. It was an added glory to this Lord Chancellor of England (and it has been to more than this one) that he was worthy and able to touch the ark of God by engaging in Sunday School work. It is more pardonable to say contemptuously, "only a Lord Chancellor," "only a statesman," "only a king," than to sneer, as silly lips have sometimes muttered, "only a Sunday School teacher."

Just before Lord Hatherley's decease, Lord *Justice James* was buried. His reputation was that of a painstaking and worthy lawyer, who could unravel intricate evidence, rally wandering pleaders, and pronounce accurate and lucid judgments. Later in the year *Sir*

John Karlake died at the age of sixty. He was one of the most accomplished advocates on our Western circuit—persuasive in pleading, and with scarcely a rival in cross-examination. His keen sense of professional honour, and his uniform courtesy and kindness seem to have made him universally beloved; and had not total blindness befallen him, there is little doubt but that this gifted lawyer, of fine presence and forensic force, and rich legal as well as manful resources, might have reached any one of the pinnacles of his profession.

With the last days of the year came the regretted end of *Sir Robert Lush*, one of the Lord Justices of Appeal. It seems to be proverbial that success at the Bar is ensured either by influence, or by a book, or by a miracle. Justice Lush's was ensured by a book that at once and continuously made him a standing authority in Procedure. He is happily remembered, not only as the industrious, sound, and acute lawyer, but as the God-fearing man, whose Christian sympathies and activities were at the disposal of the Sunday School, the Foreign Missionary enterprise, and the Christian Communion—the Baptist—to which he throughout life consistently belonged.

Next we glance at a group of gifted men whose cheering, instructing, or upholding influence many miss as they recall what flowers have faded since last year began. There was *Dr. George Rolleston*, Professor of Physiology at Oxford. He was but fifty-two years of age, and yet Oxford men, and many beyond believe that they "ne'er shall see his like again." The accomplished scientist, full of enthusiasm for biology and palaeontology, he was one of the few really eloquent imparters of what he knew; and the *man* was more than the

scholar. There was a richness and depth about his moral nature which placed him on the right side of all the great questions that need a man of religious faith as well as scientific learning as their champion. In him were united the fascination of genius and the charm of true Christian manliness. And there was *G. W. Martin*, the accomplished musical composer and conductor; and *Alfred Elmore*, the well-known artist; and *George Street*, whose distinguished funeral in Westminster Abbey was a fitting close to the career of one of the most successful church architects, who was, moreover, himself a devoted Churchman. Had he lived till Easter he would probably have seen the completion of the colossal and picturesque palace of justice in London, the commission for designing which he won against the chief architects in England to-day. There are too quite a bevy of popular actors and dramatists, whose vanishing at the call of Death emphasizes afresh the words of their own great master—

“ All the world’s a stage :
Men have their *exits* and their entrances.”

The year has worked havoc in the fair and variegated fields of *Literature*. *Lord Beaconsfield*, of whom we have already spoken at length, held a conspicuous place in the world of fiction. For years his novels have commanded a wide circulation, owing, perhaps, their chief charm to the side-lights they threw on their gifted author’s own history, experiences, tastes, views, and designs. *Dean Stanley*, too, was a prince in the domain of letters, but we shall be led to think of him in another connection in a few minutes; *Mrs. S. C. Hall*, whose name and her husband’s have shone for fifty years as

twin stars in the clear skies of light and pure literature: *W. R. Greg*, one of the best known of a thoughtful group of essayists on social subjects, from whose conclusions we may often differ, but many of whose pages compel us to face afresh some of the ancient problems as to the condition of human society.

But unspeakably more conspicuous and commanding in influence than any of these was *Thomas Carlyle*. His death last February, at the grand old age of eighty-six, was not so much like the fading of a flower as the crash of a gnarled, hoary, but majestic oak, the acorns of whose earlier years had themselves already become giants of the present. He described himself as "A writer of books," and the catalogue of his works is a fine trophy of human industry, whilst his influence in them, not only on the masses, but mainly on the *thinkers*, who, in the Senate, in the Pulpit, or by the Press, lead the masses, is the sufficient and splendid memorial of his life. There is scarcely a great thinker in England or in America for the last fifty years on whom Carlyle's direct or indirect power may not be traced. His influence as plainly marks an era in literature as did Augustine's in theology or Bacon's in science. Not that his style has become a model: sometimes it is altogether as ungainly as it is usually inimitable; but his unconventional manner of dealing, whether with biography, or history, or ethics, has fascinated the best authors. His picturesqueness has shaped their style; his tone of *hatred for all shams* has thrilled their souls. Like him, they have learned to be brave in exposing the senselessness and shame of *caste*, and in glorying in *work*, and damning with no measured curses all *idleness*. They have found brothers amongst the mighty of

all lands and ages, recognising with enthusiasm the force and value of individual men. There are passages in his books—indeed, some entire books of his, like “Frederick the Great”—that are altogether unworthy of his truer self. There are, moreover, disclosures of spirit and temper in Mr. Froude’s *Reminiscences* of him that are very saddening. But take him all in all as an author, we feel that no year, in this century at least, has buried a truer king than he. His rugged *strength*, his almost riotous *fertility*, his unfailing *freshness*, his profound *humanness*, make us feel when we read his books as though we were making a tour to highlands where majestic hills are intersected with luxurious glens, while the inspiring tides of musical oceans break at their feet, and the clear breezes of invigorating winds for ever breathe about their head. That his influence in his writings, like Solomon’s in his, is very self-contradictory, sometimes sceptical and despairing, and sometimes pulsing with faith and hope, is clear enough. But that on the whole his influence has been, and will be, for *good* I rejoice to believe. So far as it is for good, is it not because the passage I am about to quote reveals his truer and deeper self?—the self that now lives and for ever will live somewhere. Writing to the saintly Erskine, of Linlathen, about a dead friend, he says: “So be it with us all, till we quit this dim sojourn, now grown so lonely to us, and our change come! ‘Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name, *Thy will be done.*’ What else can we say? The other night, in my sleepless tossings about, which were growing more and more miserable, these words, that brief and grand prayer, came strangely into my mind with an altogether

new emphasis, as if *written*, and shining for me in mild, pure splendour on the black bosom of the night there; when I, as it were, *read* them word by word—with a sudden check to my imperfect wanderings, with a sudden softness of composure which was much unexpected. Not for, perhaps, thirty or forty years had I formally repeated that prayer—nay, I never felt before how intensely the voice of man's soul it is, the inmost aspiration of all that is high and pious in poor human nature, right worthy to be recommended with an 'After this manner pray ye.' ”

The *preacher* must not forget that *preachers* die. Many a pulpit besides the historic one in Westminster Abbey has missed the footstep and the voice with which last New Year's Day it was familiar. With one consent the Church and the nation agree that the loss in that venerable abbey was the most irreparable of the whole year. For while *Dean Stanley* was by no means only an ecclesiastic, indeed had not, in the offensive use of the word, a shred of the ecclesiastic in him, he was by the choice of his life, by his attachment to the Sanctuary, and by the achievements of the pulpit, a notable and noble preacher of our holy religion. He was much besides. *What* was he? Besides being a Christian minister whose richly suggestive, nervous and devout sermons had for their hearers again and again some of the most appreciative congregations that ever crowded Westminster Abbey, he was an ever ready and influential helper in educational, social, and indeed all philanthropic enterprises. He was by speech and by pen the keen and ardent controversialist in the lists with whatever seemed to him narrow, or intolerant, or in any other way untrue. And yet, again, besides all

this, he was the indefatigably industrious author of quite a small library of books that have lit up with a new light the Old Testament narratives, the deeply interesting history of the Greek Church, and the national annals of the ancient Churches of Canterbury and Westminster. It is scarcely time yet to inquire what was the total result for human good of all that he was and that he did. First, he *greatly strengthened the hold of religion* on the more thoughtful and cultured of our people. In his character as well as by his abilities—for in him was the rare mixture of saintliness and genius—he perpetually discovered to men how refinement and breadth are interwoven with tenderness and humility and devotion in the genuine Christian life. And secondly, *he had a gracious power of uniting men and classes and nations*, between whom the tendency to estrangement and antagonism is very rife. He was so *cosmopolitan* that his influence somehow brought nearer St. Petersburg and New York and London. He was so *manly* that classes in society between whom too often the gulfs of separation are deep and wide found in him a bridge of intercommunication. And he was so *catholic* that his name is uttered with at least as much loyal love by, what he was pleased to call, the Non-conforming as by the Conforming members of the Church of England. To few public men has there ever been such a monument as the meeting in Westminster Chapter House a few days ago, when there were gathered to honour his memory, representatives of America as well as England, of Science as well as Theology, of Law and Politics and Philanthropy, of Dissenter and Churchman, Conservative and Liberal alike. They were there to witness to the whole civilized

world how a man who is *broad*, not because he is *indifferent*, but because he is *wise* and *loving*, a man who is intolerant only to baseness and meanness and impurity, is at length enshrined in the best heart of humanity. In his day he knew the full malignity of the tongues of strife, and all the unbridled bitterness of a party press; and, as we are told, his exquisitely sensitive nature often quivered, though his courage never forsook him. Unassuming to the working men, whom it was his delight to take through his great Abbey, lavishly hospitable to the mingled groups whom he and his wife delighted to gather at their table, drawn to little folks, and a perfect master in a Children's Sermon, gentle to the bewildered poor woman, whom he guided through the intricate traffic of Westminster Bridge, he was immovable as a rock in the assaults of Convocation, and undeviating in his steady course as a Catholic Christian, when newspaper editors, and narrow ecclesiastics, and a pietistic public lampooned him or slandered him, or shuddered at him. There is no congregation that might not well thank God for such a conspicuous life of beauty and gentleness and bravery.

The Church of England must find other very serious gaps in her ministry in the review of the year. *Canon Pearson* of Salisbury, *Prebendary Burgess* of St. Paul's, *Dean Johnson* of Wells, were but types of many deceased Churchmen of good standing; while *Archdeacon Randall*, who formerly was Vicar of Redcliffe in our own city, was in his consecration to his work apparently a good model of what a ripe and devoted parochial minister ought to be. Wisely did the Bishop of Manchester lately warn his clergy against Congregationalism—by which he meant a supreme care for the congregation inside the

church, rather than for the whole population in the parish; and wise are clergymen, like Archdeacon Randall, who use for high and holy ends the immense advantages the parochial system places easily within their reach. Will not the Free Churches also be wise, if, as they slowly weigh the lessons the recent religious census teaches them, they ask whether *they* might not increasingly adapt to their work some similar territorial system? But this by the way.

The loss of the dignitaries of the Church is most numerous in the Roman Catholic Church; for within our limited knowledge of that vast Church *Bishop Daniell* of Southwark, *Bishop McCarthy* of Kerry, *Bishop Brown* of Shrewsbury, and the patriarchal *Archbishop McHale* of Taum, have passed away. Archbishop McHale was known as "the lion of the fold of Judah." Long ago he was the ally and devoted friend of Daniel O'Connell, and was alike the Irish scholar and the Irish patriot.

By the suggestion of antipathy one next remembers the death of one who for many years was a foremost Protestant champion, and a great preacher of prophecy. I mean of course *Dr. Cumming*, of the Scotch Church, in London. So poor and passing a thing is mere popularity, that to the great mass of church-goers his name has already become unfamiliar. But those of us who are now in middle manhood can recall how for many years no pulpit in London was surrounded by such crowds as his.

Our most deeply deplored bereavement as Congregationalists was in, what seemed to us, the too early death of *Dr. Enoch Mellor*, who, in the very prime of a singularly vigorous manhood, succumbed last autumn to a

painful disease. When literally the whole town turned out to show him respect at his funeral, they were burying one whose name was scarcely less honoured by the whole denomination to which he belonged than by Halifax itself. He was a man of masterly speech, vigorous logic, and fervent sympathies, whose public spirit led him to consecrate his powers to the town in which he lived, as to the Church in which he ministered.

If in this recollection of departed ministers we mention the Wesleyan Methodists last, it is that (just glancing at such an honoured name as that of the venerable *Dr. Jobson*, who filled successively almost all the important posts in the denomination with conspicuous ability and dignity) I may offer a special tribute of honour and affectionate regard to the memory of *Morley Punshon*, who for a year or two was my nearest ministerial neighbour, and who was the founder of our nearest Free Church. Of the fascinations of his oratory any of you who have listened to his highly-wrought sermons, or hung upon his lips as he delivered some of his finished and stirring platform lectures, would eagerly testify. It is even more pleasant to recall how large-hearted he was, how genial, how unassuming, how untiring. Few Methodists, while steadfastly loyal to their own Communion, were more catholic towards all sister denominations. His own people here and in Canada gave him their highest distinctions by electing him President of their conferences; and never were those honourable posts better filled. And now may I say that among the memories that are beginning to cluster round our sanctuary, I like to linger on the fact that at one time he was an occasional worshipper on Sunday

evenings here. He was for a while quite a broken man, and suffering thus from shattered nerve and much heart-ache, he was only able to preach once on the Sunday, and liked in the evening, after our service had begun, to steal quietly in and sit yonder. I remember at the time his trial was most heavily pressing him, he told me one evening after service how keenly he had enjoyed the sympathetic playing on our organ, and the subdued but general congregational singing of our familiar hymn, "Nearer, my God, to Thee." And then we conversed together, I being chiefly a thankful listener, about the mystery of death, by which, as he hoped, our souls would get nearer to God than ever they had been before ; how, rescued from all *sin*, delivered from *self-consciousness*, which is but a symptom of moral disease, and escaping all the *illusions of sense* that mislead us here, we should know the beautiful goodness of God, and the rich, tender unspeakable glories of Christ, as we do not now. And to-night that is *his* destiny. In due time may it be yours and mine !

Thus, once again, before my voice, too, is hushed in the eternal silences, I have for a few minutes talked to you of the dead. "The grass withereth," even "the flower fadeth," or, as St. Peter, in his quotation from Isaiah, has it, "the flower falleth." Yes, both fadeth and falleth. Some, indeed, fall before they have begun to fade ; all fade when they have fallen. Yet a sentence or two more before I close. "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever." The only amaranthine flower is Truth ; all Truth ; all God's Word : God's Truth as it comes to us in the lives of men, illustrious or obscure, great and distant, or near and dear ; God's Truth as it

comes to us by any voice. But to us, as souls, who, because of human evil and error, need the revelation of a redeeming God—to us it is emphatically God's Word in this Book, and yet more emphatically and completely in His Son. "The Word who was with God and who was God." My friends, amid a changing, dying world, and yet having in yourselves the unsatisfied longing of immortal natures, will you reject the Word of God which endureth for ever? this Word which, by the good tidings about forgiveness, holiness, love, eternal life, is preached unto you? "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance."

"What is death? 'Tis to be free,
No more to love, or hope, or fear,
To join the great equality,
All, all alike, are humbled there.
The mighty grave
Wraps lord and slave;
Nor pride nor poverty dares come
Within that refuge-house—the tomb.

Spirit with the drooping wing,
And the ever-weeping eye,
Thou of all earth's kings art king,
Empires at thy footstool lie
Beneath thee strewed
Their multitude
Sink like waves upon the shore,
Storms shall never raise them more.

Earth has hosts, but thou canst show
Many a million for her one;
Through the gates the mortal flow
Hath, for countless years, rolled on.
Back from the tomb
No step has come;
There fixed till the last thunder's sound
Shall bid thy prisoners be unbound."

Bristol.

URIAH R. THOMAS.

The Preacher's Homiletical Commentary.

HOMILETIC SKETCHES ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

OUR PURPOSE.—Many learned and devout men have gone *Philologically* through this *TEHELIM*, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough *HOMILETIC* treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

OUR METHOD.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) *THE HISTORY* of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) *ANNOTATIONS* of the passages. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase or allusion that may occur.—(3) *THE ARGUMENT* of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is amongst the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) *THE HOMILETICS* of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately deduced, as to suggest such thoughts and indicate such sermonizing methods as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

No. CLIV.

The Sublime Object of Worship.

“PRAISE YE THE LORD, PRAISE YE THE NAME OF THE LORD,” &c.
—*Ps. cxxxv. 1-21.*

HISTORY:—This Psalm is a composite, made up of sentences from other portions of this book, as well as from prophetic productions. Hence some have styled it a Mosaic Psalm. The parts of this ode may be found in *Ps. cxxxiv. 1, Ps. cxlvii. 1, cxv., Jer. x. 13, Ps. cxxxvi. 10-22, Deut. xxxii. 26.* Hengstenberg regards it as the first of a series running on to the 146th inclusive. No one knows its author, or, rather,

its compiler; nor can anyone determine with certainty the time and circumstances of its composition. Delitzsch entitles it “four-voiced hallelujah to the God of gods.”

ANNOTATIONS: — Ver. 1, 2.
“Praise ye the Lord, praise ye the name of the Lord,” &c.
“Hallelujah! Praise the name of Jehovah, praise ye servants of Jehovah.” The close of the Psalm shows that although the priests are included among the servants of

Jehovah, they are not exclusively intended, as in Ps. cxxxiv. 1. Even here, however, the priests are representatives of Israel at large." *Alexander.*

Ver. 3. "*Praise the Lord, for He is good ; sing praises unto His name, for it is pleasant.*" "*Praise ye Jah, for Jahve is good : harp unto His name, for it is lovely.*"—*Delitzsch.* Which is pleasant or lovely, the name of the Lord or the act of praising Him? Both are true.

Ver. 4. "*For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto Himself, and Israel for His peculiar treasure.*" Here is a special reason why Israel should praise Him for himself as His possession.

Ver. 5. "*For I know that the Lord is great, that our Lord is above all gods.*" The pronoun "*I*" is emphatic, indicating the author's personal assurance of what he affirms.

Ver. 6. "*Whatsoever the Lord pleased that did He in heaven and in earth, in the seas and all deep places.*" The idea is whatsoever this God of gods willeth He carries out, whether the will refers to heaven or earth or seas or the abysses of the deep.

Ver. 7. "*He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the*

earth : He maketh lightnings for the rain, He bringeth the wind out of His treasures." He exhales the vapours, kindles the lightning, and brings forth the "*wind out of His treasures.*" It is said that rain from a thundercloud is more fertilising than any other rain.

Ver. 8. "*Who smote the first-born of Egypt both of man and beast.*" The destruction of the firstborn in Egypt was the immediate cause of Israel's deliverance.

Ver. 9. "*Who sent tokens and wonders in the midst of thee, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.*" See our remarks on Ps. lxxviii. 43, also cxvi. 19.

Ver. 10. "*Who smote great nations and slew mighty kings.*" To the miracles of Egypt and the Exodus are now added those of Canaan and the Conquest.

Ver. 11 and 12. "*Sihon, the king of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan,*" &c. "*Sihon and Og are mentioned as the most potent of the vanquished kings (Amos ii. 9), or as the first vanquished and slain. Their slaughter led to the occupation of the land of promise, and seems to have made a deep impression upon the*

victorious people."—*Canon Cooke.*

Ver. 13. "*Thy name, O Lord, endureth for ever, and Thy memorial, O Lord, throughout all generations.*" He who thus wrought in Israelitish history and works in nature is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever (Exod. iii. 15).

Ver. 14. "*For the Lord will judge His people, and He will repent Himself concerning His people.*" That is, He will vindicate them, and see that they are right.

Ver. 15 to 18. "*The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the works of men's hands. They have eyes,*" &c. See our remarks on the language under Ps. cxv. 4-8.

Ver. 19 and 20. "*Bless the Lord, O house of Israel: bless the Lord, O house of Aaron,*" &c." The Psalm closes as it began, with a call to praise the Lord. The threefold call

in Ps. cxv. 9-11, cxviii. 2-4, becomes fourfold here by the introduction of the house of Levi."

Ver. 21. "*Blessed be the Lord out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem, praise ye the Lord.*" "Blessed be Jahve out of Zion, who dwelleth in Jerusalem. Hallelujah!"—*Delitzsch.*

ARGUMENT:—The Psalmist exhorts all to praise the Lord, ver. 1-4, and then declares His glory in nature ver. 5-7, in His wonderful works for Israel, ver. 8-12, which will again repeat themselves in the future, and raise them out of their wretched state, ver. 13, 14, contrasts with Him the vain idols and their equally vain worshippers, ver. 15-18, and finally returns again to call upon men to praise God, ver. 19-21."—*Hengstenberg.*

HOMILETICS:—The author of this Psalm presents the sublime Object of worship in certain aspects, in order that men might praise and adore Him. A brief glance at those aspects may at once inspire and direct us. He is presented here—

I. IN HIS ABSOLUTE GOODNESS. "*Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the name of the Lord,*" &c.

Why is His name to be praised by all His "*servants,*" and all who stand in His "*house*" and "*courts?*"

Here is the reason. "*For the Lord is good.*" This is the highest reason for worship, the reason why all intelligences, even the loftiest, must worship Him for ever. He is good essentially, eternally, infinitely, and immutably good. He is the original *Fountain*, and the universal *Standard* of all good. Were He not good, who could praise Him? Who ought to praise Him? None. Esteem, reverence, adoration, these necessary elements of worship could not exist were He not good. This makes worship what all true worship ever is, a pleasant thing. Whether the word "*pleasant*" here applies to His "*name*," which is Himself, or to His worship, it matters not, it is true of both. His name is happy, and His worship is delightful. He is presented here—

II. IN HIS RELATIVE KINDNESS. "*For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto Himself, and Israel for His peculiar treasure.*" As if the author had said, He is not only absolutely good in Himself, but kind to us. He has singled us out from all the tribes of the race for merciful ends. But the favours which He bestowed on Israel are only a shadowy specimen of His kindness to all men, especially to Englishmen. Is not Britain, after all, more favoured than ever Palestine was, even in its palmy days, the land of *liberty, Bibles, Churches, &c.*? He is presented here—

II. IN HIS TRANSCENDENT SUPREMACY. "*For I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods.*" The whole intelligent universe consists of almost endless gradations, one series rising higher and so on, "*thrones, principalities, dominions,*" &c. But there is One over all, over all worlds, systems, hierarchies, &c., the King of all kings, and the Lord of all lords. He is presented here—

IV. In His SOVEREIGN OPERATIONS.

*“Whatsoever the Lord pleased that did He
In heaven and in earth,
In the seas and all deep places,” &c.*

First: His sovereign operations in *material nature* are here referred to.

*“In heaven and in earth,
In the sea and all deep places,
He causeth the vapours to ascend
From the ends of the earth,
He maketh lightnings for the rain,” &c.*

Of His own free will He gave birth to the universe in the boundlessness of immensity alone, there was no counsellor to instruct Him, no power to coerce Him. It was with Him to determine whether He should create a universe or not, and as to what kind of universe it should be. *“Whatsoever the Lord pleased that did He.”* Secondly: His sovereign operations in *human history* are here referred to.

*“Who smote the firstborn of Egypt,
Both of man and beast,
Who sent tokens and wonders,” &c.*

The reference in these verses is to what He did to deliver the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, and to conduct them into the Promised Land. He *“smote the first-born.”* He wrought wonders through Moses on the banks of the Nile, He overwhelmed Pharaoh and his hosts, He crushed great nations and their kings, He destroyed the Canaanites and gave their land to Israel. This is only a specimen of God in their history, and in all human history He acts according to the counsel of His own will. He raiseth up one and puts down another. *“He doeth what seemeth right in the armies of heaven,” &c.* He is presented here—

V. In His ENDLESS EXISTENCE.

*“Thy name, O Lord, endureth for ever,
And Thy memorial, O Lord,
Throughout all generations.
For the Lord will judge His people,
And He will repent himself
Concerning His servants.”*

First: His character is everlasting. *“Thy name, O Lord, endureth for ever.”* His name is His character, and that is eternal. Secondly: His *remembrance* is everlasting. *“And Thy memorial,”* &c. He will never be forgotten, never, either by His enemies or His friends. All moral souls are bound to remember Him. He is the One with Whom all moral mind will “have to do” for ever. Thirdly: His *kindness* is everlasting. *“The Lord will judge (vindicate) his people. He will repent”* (relent), &c. He will never cease to vindicate their characters, and to deal tenderly with their imperfections. He will appear even to relent. He is presented here—

VI. In His UNAPPROACHABLE GREATNESS. He is here brought into contrast with the heathen idols—

*“The idols of the heathen are silver and gold,
The work of men’s hands.
They have mouths, but they speak not,
Eyes have they, but they see not.”*

These verses (15 to 18), are almost identical with Ps. cxv. 4-8 (See our remarks on these verses, vol. xlix., page 159). Idols, what are they to Him? What are the highest objects of the earth to Him? What is the universe to Him?

CONCLUSION:—Do not the aspects in which the author of this ode presents Jehovah manifest His supreme

claim to the hallelujah of all souls? With what especial force is the exhortation urged in the last words of the Psalm—

*“Bless the Lord, O house of Israel,
Bless the Lord, O house of Aaron,
Bless the Lord, O house of Levi,
Ye that fear the Lord, bless the Lord.”*

No. CLV.

The Eternity of God's Goodness.

“O GIVE THANKS UNTO THE LORD, FOR HE IS GOOD,” &c.—*Ps. cxxxvi.*
1-26.

HISTORY.—There is a striking similarity between this Psalm and the preceding. Here, as in that, the people are exhorted to praise Jehovah as the God of nature, the deliverer of Israel from Egypt, and the conqueror of hostile nations. Like the former, too, its authorship and circumstances of composition are unknown.

ANNOTATIONS.—Ver. 1. “*O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.*” This verse is a repetition of the commencement of *Ps. cvi.* and *cxviii.*, but the refrain is carried through all its parts.

Ver. 2, 3.—“*O give thanks unto the God of gods; for his mercy endureth for ever.*

O give thanks to the Lord of lords,” &c. He is to be praised as the God of all gods, and the Lord of all lords, the Supreme of the Universe; and the reason is because His mercy—or as Delitzsch renders it—His “goodness,” endures for ever, or unto eternity.

Ver. 4, 5.—“*To Him who alone doeth great wonders,”* &c. See *Exod. xv. 11*—wonders in nature, wonders in human history.

Ver. 6.—“*To Him that stretched out the earth above, the waters,”* &c. The waters of the great deep mentioned in *Gen. vii. 11*, are here meant.

Ver. 7, 8, 9, 10.—“*To Him that made great lights,”* &c. See *Gen. i. 14-16*.

Ver. 11-22:—“*To Him that smote Egypt in their first-born,*” &c. Here the writer passes from what the Almighty did in nature to what He did for the children of Israel, in delivering them from Egypt, dividing the Red Sea, overthrowing Pharaoh and his host, smiting hostile kings and nations, and putting them in possession of the Promised Land.

Ver. 23-26. “*Who remembered us in our low estate,*” &c. Here allusion is made probably to their deliverance from Babylonian captivity.

The refrain of this Psalm, “*His mercy—or His goodness endureth for ever,*” seems to have been common in Jewish worship, and is here repeated no less than twenty-six times.

ARGUMENT.—In the first sixteen verses Israel is exhorted to praise Jehovah as the God of Nature, and as the Deliverer of Israel from Egypt. In verses 17 to 26 as Israel’s Guide in the Wilderness, and the Provider of all Creatures, and the God of Heaven, to whom all praise is due.

HOMILETICS:—There is but little in this Psalm that is not found substantially in the immediately preceding one. The peculiarity is in the frequent repetition of the refrain, “*His mercy endureth for ever.*” The grand subject appears to be *The eternity of God’s goodness, a reason for praising Him in all the works of His hands.*

I. This eternal goodness is a reason for praising Him in the MATERIAL UNIVERSE.

“*O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,*” &c.

The expressions, “*for He is good,*” “*the God of gods,*” and “*He doeth great wonders,*” are repetitions of verses in the preceding Psalm, and therefore need not be noticed here. But here we have a particular sketch of His creative agency. He “*made the heavens,*” He “*stretched out the earth above the waters,*” He “*made great lights,*” the “*sun to rule by*

day," "the moon and stars to rule by night," &c. And in all these operations we are here taught that He is to be praised because of the eternity of His goodness. "*His mercy—or kindness—endureth for ever.*" When the grandeur of nature overawes you, when its terrific phenomena, its tornadoes, thunders, earthquakes, volcanoes, seem to overwhelm you, still praise Him. Why? Because "*His mercy endureth for ever.*" There is goodness in all. Goodness in the raging, roaring billows that hurl mighty fleets into the abysses of death, goodness in the pestilential winds that breathe death into whole populations, goodness in earthquakes that engulf cities. "*His mercy endureth for ever.*" He is always good, "Fury is not in Me, saith the Lord."

II. His eternal goodness is a reason for praising Him in the HISTORY OF MANKIND. There is a threefold agency of God in the history of mankind referred to in this Psalm. First: In the *deliverance* of His people.

"To Him that smote Egypt,
For His mercy endureth for ever.
And brought out Israel from among them,
For His mercy endureth for ever," &c.

These verses on to the sixteenth are almost identical with verses in the preceding Psalm, and therefore, call for no further remarks. Secondly: In the *destruction* of despots.

"To Him that smote great kings,
For His mercy endureth for ever.
And slew famous kings,
For His mercy endureth for ever," &c.

The author of this spirited poem sees mercy in the overthrow of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea,

slaying mighty kings such as Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og the king of Bashan. These two are given merely as specimens of worthless tyrants that mercy sweeps from the earth. Truly, it is because God's "*mercy endureth for ever*," that the despots, and the tyrants, and the murderers of their race are swept from the earth. First: There is mercy for *them* in their own destruction. If there be no future state it puts an end to their miseries. The passions of despots often burn in them as the flames of hell. Their death quenches those flames, extinguishes those flames. If there be a future, then their death is a mercy to them. The longer they live the greater their guilt, and the greater their guilt the longer their agonies in the flames of retribution. Secondly: There is mercy for their *race* in their destruction. When such demons in human flesh are cut down the world breathes freer, a load is rolled from its heart, obstacles are swept from its path of progress. When the Pharaohs are overwhelmed, the human Israel can march on to promised lands.

But why, it may be asked, should the perpetuity of Divine mercy be a reason for praising God? There are at least three reasons why we should worship Him on account of the perpetuity of His goodness. (1) Because Divine mercy will always work for good. Therefore the longer it continues the better. Whatever it does, whether it rolls thunderbolts of destruction, or breathes the reviving influences of spring into the heart of the world, its object is the happiness of the universe, therefore we rejoice. We thank God that it will continue for ever. (2) Because the future ages of the world will require mercy. There will be much for mercy to do

on this planet yet, before the race will be brought back in harmony with God. There are Pharaoh's famous kings Og's and Sihon's, that will rise up in the coming generations, opposing the progress of human happiness. They will have to be swept away, and as mercy is enduring, mercy will be there to do it. For the sake of posterity, we thank God that "His mercy endureth for ever." (3) Because we ourselves shall ever be dependent on mercy. We have to live for ever, yet no period will ever come when we shall not require the aid of mercy. We shall require it through all the days of our earthly pilgrimage, we shall require it in "that day," we shall require it for ever. Thirdly: In His regard for all.

*"Who remembered us in our low estate,
For His mercy endureth for ever.
And hath redeemed us from our enemies,
For His mercy endureth for ever.
Who giveth food to all flesh,
For His mercy endureth for ever."*

All men are in a "low estate." What is the highest? Dust and ashes. In that "estate" He remembereth us. He "knoweth our frames. He remembereth we are dust." All men have enemies, foes to their virtues, their interest, their happiness. He delivers them. All men require nourishment. They live by the appropriation of the fruits of the earth. He "giveth food to all flesh." Thus His "mercy endureth for ever," and thus should we praise Him in all.

CONCLUSION:—Let us never doubt the eternity of God's goodness. "The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but His kindness shall never depart

from us." Unbounded faith in the eternity of His goodness will inspire us to praise Him in all the phenomena of material nature, and in human history, in the storm as well as in the calm, in the midnight as well as in the sunshine. Let the refrain in every expression of our daily life be, "*For His mercy endureth for ever.*"

HOMILETIC GLANCES AT THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

[As our purpose in the treatment of this Gospel is purely the development, in the briefest and most suggestive form of Sermonic Outlines, we must refer our readers to the following works for all critical inquiries into the author and authorship of the book, and also for any minute criticisms on difficult clauses. The works we shall especially consult are: "Introduction to New Testament," by Beek; "Commentary on John," by Tholuck; "Commentary on John," by Hengstenberg; "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," by Westcott; "The Gospel History," by Ebrard; "Our Lord's Divinity," by Liddon; "St. John's Gospel," by Oosterzee; "Doctrine of the Person of Christ," by Horner, Lange, Sears, Farrer, etc., etc.]

No. CLIII.

A Threefold Type of Sinners.

"THEN PILATE THEREFORE TOOK JESUS AND SCOURGED HIM," &c.—
John xix. 1-16.

EXPOSITION: Ver. 1: "*Then Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged Him.*" In order to conciliate the intolerant and bloodthirsty bigots, Pilate had before proposed chastising Christ. "I will therefore chastise Him and release Him," (Luke xxiii. 10). The chastisement here referred to was in all probability the scourging which he now in-

flicted. "The scourging," says Philo Judæus, "was that inflicted on the worst criminals." Monuments show that this scourging was a custom in ancient Egypt. Moses legalised the custom, but limited it to forty lashes. "Scourging," says Godet, "as practised among the Romans, was so cruel a punishment that the prisoner

very often succumbed to it. The scourge was formed of switches or thongs, armed at the extremity with pieces of bone or lead. The prisoner received the strokes while fastened to a small post, so as to have his back bent, and the skin on the stretch. The flesh became quick flesh and the blood spurted out with the first strokes." Pilate now inflicted this chastisement, not as a punishment—for as yet Christ had not been pronounced a criminal—but in order to conciliate the persecutors, and thus, if possible, to avoid that which he felt in his own conscience would be a crime, viz., to pronounce on Him the sentence of death.

Ver. 2, 3: "*And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe, and said, Hail King of the Jews, and they smote Him with their hands,*" &c. The crown of thorns and the purple robe, and the reed, which Matthew tells us they put in His right hand, are the expressions of their malignant mockery and derision. It is not said that Pilate commanded or even sanctioned them in this, but it was no doubt done under his eyes.

Ver. 4, 5; "*Pilate therefore went forth again and saith unto them, Behold I bring Him forth to you, that ye may know I find no fault in Him. Then came Jesus forth wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, and Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!*"

The object which Pilate had in thus bringing Jesus forth, all bleeding from the scourging, wearing in mockery the insignia of royalty, was no doubt so to assuage their wrath, and evoke their pity, that they might willingly let Him go. He bids them look upon Him in His wretched condition and be satisfied. Ecce Homo! "The solemn presentation of Jesus before the world preceding His final delivery to death, has produced the most solemn impression upon the minds of the Church of all Christian ages. The pencils of the great masters of Christian art have selected it as a choice subject. Pre-eminently He stands forth, the Man, the representative of the race, the memento of our sins, the exhibition of our misery."

Ver. 6: "*When the chief priests and officers saw him they cried out, saying, Crucify Him, Crucify Him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye Him*

and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him." The spectacle of the agonised Prisoner failed to touch their savage natures; like Shyloek, they must have their "pound of flesh." In bringing Christ forth and calling their attention to Him, Pilate seems to say, "Here, here is your man! Look at Him bleeding from the scourge and mocked by the fictitious emblems of a royal crown and royal robe. Surely that is enough. Let Him creep away to His delusions in peace. But when this unjust judge perceives that the sop he would throw to Cerberus only makes them more furious, he drops all remaining care for their Victim, throws off the case entirely from his jurisdiction, and cries with mingled vexation and scorn, 'Well, then, take the man yourselves, I wash my hands of Him, though I tell you again, I find no fault in Him.'—*P. Griffiths, A.M.* (Prebendary of St. Paul's).

Ver. 7: "*The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.*" It was a custom of the Romans to enjoy their own laws and institutions. The Jews here take their

stand on this ground and appeal to an article in their creed (Lev. xxiv. 15), an article which condemns blasphemers to death. "*He made Himself the Son of God,*" therefore He is a blasphemer, and now we demand that as thou wilt not condemn Him as the Kings of the Jews on political grounds, thou wilt condemn on the ground of our law as a blasphemer.

Ver. 8, 9: "*When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid, and went again into the judgment-hall and saith unto Jesus, Whence art Thou?*" The "Son of God" had a meaning to Pilate that struck him with terror. Once more he returns to the judgment-hall—the Prætorium, and addresses to Christ a question referring to His personal origin, "Whence art Thou?" He seemed to feel that He had some supernatural origin, for he knew well concerning His natural origin, viz., that He was a Galilean. "*But Jesus gave him no answer.*" Christ had virtually answered the question over and over again, further words would be useless. There is a moral majesty in His silence.

Ver. 10 "*Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest Thou not unto*

me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee?" Pilate seems to have felt the silence of Christ, felt it as a reproach, felt it to the quick, and perhaps with indignant haughtiness asserts his power. Thy destiny is in my hands.

Ver. 11: "*Thou couldst have no power against Me except it were given thee from above.*"

"Thou thinkest too much of thy power, Pilate. Against me that power is none, save what is meted out to thee by special Divine appointment for special ends." "*From above,*" not from the Roman Emperor, but from heaven. "*Therefore he that delivereth Me unto thee hath the greater sin.*" He, that is Caiaphas, the high priest, including also all who were acting with him; the whole Sanhedrin is included in this "*he.*"

Ver. 12: "*And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release Him.*"

He had sought to release Him before, he could have released Him by his own powers, but he wanted to do it in a way that would insure their consent. The more he saw of Jesus the more he was impressed with the fact of His innocence, and with His

supernatural bearing. "*But the Jews cried out saying, If thou let this man go thou art not Cæsar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.*" Here they struck the blow that would bend the soul of Pilate to their purpose. "They have noticed his pliability, they work upon it now by arousing his fears. What! snatch out of our hands a wretch, whom we as friends to Cæsar, have publicly denounced before the representative of Cæsar, for conspiring against Cæsar? Remember if you let such a man escape, you are not one of Cæsar's friends. And this was enough."—*Prebendary Griffiths.*

Ver. 13: "*When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth and sat down in the judgment-seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew Gabbatha.*" His mind was now brought to their purpose, and he brings Jesus forth, takes the judgment seat and pronounces the sentence against the prisoner. "*The Pavement*" was a hall of mosaic or tessellated, on which the throne stood. "*Gabbatha*" signifies an elevation.

Ver. 14: "*And it was the pre-*

paration of the Passover, and about the sixth hour." "The day before the Jewish (Saturday) Sabbath; that is Friday, the day of crucifixion. As the Jewish Sabbath commenced on the evening of the preceding Friday, so the latter part of Friday was originally devoted to a preparation for the Sabbath. But gradually the line of preparation was extended, and finally the whole day became the preparation. It was the Sabbath preparation in the Passover week. The "*sixth hour*," means towards noon. "*He saith unto the Jews, Behold your king.*" Here Pilate rebounds from compassion and respect, and flies back to contempt and mockery, and with bitter irony exclaims, "*Behold your king.*" There He is.

Ver. 15: "*But they cried out, Away with Him, Away with Him, Crucify Him.*" King or not, man or not, they will

crucify Him. Nothing else will satisfy them. "*Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king?*" He thus avenges himself for the act of baseness and vengeance to which they had forced him. "*The Chief Priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar.*" Alford remarks that those who thus cried died miserably in rebellion against Cæsar forty years after.

Ver. 16: "*Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified, and they took Jesus and led Him away.*" Against all justice, against his own conscience, against his solemnly and repeatedly pronounced judicial decision, that He was innocent, whom he now gave up. And so amid the conflict of human passions and the advancing tide of crime, the Scripture was fulfilled which said, "He is led as a lamb to the slaughter."—*Dr. Brown.*

HOMILETICS:—Perhaps all sinners of all ages may be brought into a threefold class or group, those who sin *against* conviction, those who sin *from* conviction, and those who sin *without* conviction.

I. Those who sin AGAINST conviction. To this class Pilate belonged. How often does he here and in the preceding chapter publicly declare to the Jews that he could "*find no fault*" in Christ! And how manifest from

his various attempts to deliver Christ, was the deep conviction of His innocence. Notwithstanding this he ultimately condemns Him, and thus perpetrates an act in direct antagonism to his profound convictions. First: To sin against convictions is very *hard* work. How difficult did Pilate find it, how his better nature struggled against the popular cry that was urging him on to the terrible deed. How many attempts he made to avoid its perpetration, but at last his love of popularity, and his dread of Cæsar overbore his conscience, and urged him to that from which his moral nature recoiled. Perhaps the greatest difficulty he encountered was the conduct of Christ in his last interview with Him. The *silence* of Christ to his question, "*Whence art Thou?*" must have shaken him to the centre of his soul. "*Jesus gave Him no answer.*" How terribly eloquent that silence!* And then His speech. "*Thou couldest have no power at all against Me except it were given Thee from above.*" Thus pointing his guilty nature to the God who is over all. Secondly: To sin against conviction is a very *fiendish*

* The silence of Christ before His enemies. There is a silence which is often more eloquent than speech, means more than any words, and speaks ten times more powerfully to the heart. Such for example, is the silence when the heart is too full for utterance, and the organs of speech are choked by the whelming tide of emotion. The sight of a great man so shaken and quivering with feeling that the tongue can give no voice to what the heart feels, is of all human rhetoric the most potent. Such also is the silence of a wise man, challenged to speak by those whom he feels unworthy of his words. The man who can stand and listen to the language of stolid ignorance, venomous bigotry, and personal insult, addressed to him in an offensive spirit, and offers no reply, exerts a far greater power upon the minds of his assailants, than he could by words, however peaceful. His silence reflects a moral majesty before

work. Satan and his legions pursue their course of wickedness in opposition to their moral convictions. Truly this is the worst class of sinners, "he that knoweth his master's will and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." What millions here in England are sinning against their convictions. Another class of sinners are—

II. Those who sin FROM conviction. Such were the Chief Priests and officers, and members of the Sanhedrim. "*When the Chief Priests therefore and officers saw Him, they cried out saying, crucify Him, crucify Him. We have a law and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.*" These men seem to have had a conviction that Christ was a religious impostor, and that according to their law they were bound to put Him to death (Deut. xviii. 20). Thus Saul of Tarsus said when he was persecuting the Church he thought he "ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus." Whilst there is no true religion without sincerity, there is often sincerity where there is no religion. It is not enough for a man to believe he is doing right, he must have sufficient evidence that he is right.

which the heart of his assailants will scarcely fail to cower. Such was the silence which Christ now maintained in the hall. He knew the utter futility of their charges, He understood their malignant spirit, He knew the truth they wanted not, and that to reason with men of their animus would only be to "cast pearls before swine." Sublime magnanimity I see in this silence of Jesus. In His bright consciousness of truth, all their false allegations against Him melted away as the mists from the mountains in the summer sun. His divine soul looked calmly down upon the dark and wretched spirits in that hall, as the queen of the night looks peacefully upon our earth, amid the rolling clouds and the howling winds of nature in a passing storm. (See "Genius of the Gospel.")

Innumerable heathens, heretics, persecutors, sin from conviction, they believe they are doing right, whilst they are perpetrating the greatest enormities on which the sun has ever shone. On the world's long black roll of crime there are none greater than those enacted from religious convictions. Another class of sinners are—

III. Those who sin WITHOUT conviction. Such were the soldiers who “*platted a crown of thorns and put it on Christ's head, and put on Him a purple robe, and said, Hail, King of the Jews, and they smote Him with their hands.*” Such also the thoughtless rabble who led Him to the brow of Calvary and nailed Him to the cross. In these men conscience was dormant, they had no moral convictions, they were the miserable hirelings of Pilate and the Chief Priests. From sordid considerations they sold themselves to the infernal enterprise. The millions in almost every age are like “dumb, driven cattle,” mere instruments of their masters; they will work in the most immoral trades, in the most diabolical professions, in the most infernal enterprises in order to please their masters and to get gain.

CONCLUSION :—Here, then, we have a picture of the wicked world. Here are the three great classes of sinners, to one of which every sinner belongs.

THE CIVIL LAWS OF ENGLAND.—“The laws of England have been the subject of eulogy to many sagacious and learned men. I have read them repeatedly, and pondered them attentively. I find them often dilatory, often uncertain, often contradictory, often cruel, often ruinous. Whenever they find a man down, they keep him so, and the more pertinaciously the more earnestly he appeals to them. Like tilers, in mending one hole they always make another. There is no country in which they move with such velocity where life is at stake, or where property is to be defended, so slowly. Can it be wondered that upon a bench under so rotten an effigy of justice, sat a Saggs, a Jeffries, a Finch, and a Page?”—*W. S. Landor.*

Sermonic Saplings.

THE SOCIALLY IMMORAL IN CHURCHES.

“IT IS REPORTED COMMONLY THAT THERE IS FORNICATION AMONG YOU,” &c.—1 *Cor.* v. 1-5.



THE greater portion of this chapter is taken up with one subject, that is gross social immorality. The verses before us suggest three general remarks—

I. THAT THE SOCIALLY IMMORAL SOMETIMES FIND THEIR WAY INTO CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

It had been reported to Paul that there were some members of the Corinthian Church guilty of gross “fornication.” That one of the members had actually married his father’s wife; not, however, his own mother, but his stepmother. Such a piece of immorality would be regarded with the utmost abhorrence, even through the whole Roman Empire. Paul says that such a case was not “so much as named amongst the Gentiles.” How such a character became a member of the Christian community is not stated. It is reasonable, however, to suppose that it was through imposition on the one hand, and the lack of scrutiny on the other. It is to be feared that the admission of the socially immoral into Churches has in every age been too common. How many Churches are there in England entirely free from those who every day outrage the golden rule, “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you”? There are merchants that cheat their customers, lawyers that swindle their clients, doctors

that take advantage of their patients, statesmen that deceive their constituents, and in the name of patriotism promote their own selfish ends, masters and mistresses that oppress their servants, servants unfaithful to their employers; aye, the Church is a field in which grows the tare as well as the wheat, a net in which there is the "unclean" as well as the "clean." Another remark suggested is—


II. That CHURCHES IN THEIR INTERNAL RELIGIOUS DISPUTATIONS ARE IN DANGER OF OVERLOOKING THE SOCIALLY IMMORAL AMONG THEM. "*And ye are puffed up and have not rather mourned.*" Probably there were those in the Church who were proud of the membership of this incestuous man: perhaps he was an orator, or had a long purse, or was a person of great social influence. We have known joint stock swindlers who have been made chairmen of religious meetings, and who have been cheered to the echo. Party feeling was so strong, and religious disputation so rife amongst them that such immoralities escaped their notice. Who is the best preacher, what is the sound doctrine, what are the ceremonies to be observed? Such questions as these were all-absorbing amongst them. Moral character was a secondary thing, theories and beliefs primary. This has ever been too much the case in Christian Churches. Creeds are more thought of than character, doctrines than doings, heretics dreaded more than rogues. Some of the worst men morally I have ever known have been prominent members of Churches. Hence the saying, sooner trust a man of the world than a professor of religion. Another remark suggested is—

III. That THE EXCLUSION BY THE CHURCHES OF SUCH

MEMBERS FROM OUT THEIR MIDST IS AN URGENT DUTY. A true Church is a community of Christly men, and the presence of such characters in it is an outrage. The verses teach First :—That their expulsion *should be practised with the utmost zeal*. It would seem that no sooner did Paul hear of this abomination than he determined to put an end to it. “For I verily as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed.” As if he had said though “absent” from you, as soon as I heard it I determined to get such a vile character expelled forthwith from the community, and to do it when they were gathered together “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,” that is by the authority and power of Christ. Paul seems to burn with zeal in the matter. Zeal is not an uncommon thing in Churches, in some cases and seasons it becomes a glowing passion, but, alas ! it is too often concerned more with the tenets of creeds, and the interests of sects, than with purity of life in its members. These verses teach, Secondly : That the expulsion should be practised with the utmost zeal, *not to destroy, but to save the offender*. “Deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Satan was regarded as the origin of all physical evils, and the meaning here may be, deliver the immoral person over to the sufferings of excommunication, but what for ? Not to destroy him, but “that the spirit may be saved.” All punishment should be reformative, should be inflicted to correct, not to crush. “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, you that are spiritual, restore such an one.”

THE INNER WITNESS.

“TO REVEAL HIS SON IN ME.”—*Gal.* i. 16.

N all his epistles, with what confidence and assurance, the Apostle speaks of his conversion. He *knew* a great and radical change had been effected in him, and he was neither reluctant, nor ashamed to confess it. This he did, not in the spirit of boastful pride, but with humble gratitude to Almighty God who had been pleased to open his eyes, and call him out of nature's darkness, and translate him into the kingdom of His dear Son. The change was not a mere alteration of opinion, or the assumption of a new profession of religion. He was not a Christian by birth; or from education. The spirit of the age had not transformed him: no predisposition of his mind towards Christianity had changed him. He was not weak-minded, and easily persuaded to break away from the traditions and religion of his fathers; nothing short of supernatural influences could have produced the radical alteration in his life, which came about after he was met by the risen and loving Saviour on the Damascus road. Paul gave up his old habits, and repudiated his old notions of righteousness, because he felt *within him* the power of the Saviour's resurrection. In this chapter, the Apostle refers to what he had formerly been—an earnest and enthusiastic adherent to the Jewish religion. He had been foremost, amongst the infuriated, in wasting the Church of Jesus of Nazareth; but, there had come a crisis in his moral being: and the turning point in his life was when it pleased God to “reveal His Son” *in* him. From that moment, he became a new creature in Christ Jesus, and sought to establish the faith which aforetime he had endeavoured

to destroy. The whole tide of his renewed powers, now flowed into a new channel ; and, becoming dead to the world, he lived to, and upon Him, who had died, that he might live. Let us notice—

I. THE GRAND REVELATION VOUCHSAFED TO THE APOSTLE PAUL.—(a.) *The subject of it.* The Apostle had, all his life long, been familiar with the old Testament Scriptures, had enjoyed the revelation vouchsafed by Moses, the prophets and the Psalms ; and in his way, he had apprehended God, and entered with conscientious earnestness into His service ; but, he had failed to see Jesus in those Hebrew writings, and had failed to identify the lowly Nazarene, as the Messiah predicted in them. He saw in “the man Christ Jesus” only a man, and one who had usurped and assumed a position He had no right to occupy. He had heard much about the *words* and *works* of one called Christ, but he did not see Him as the Son of the ever living God. But, on his way to Damascus, he was met by that Jesus, who had been crucified, and whom Paul was persecuting ; and God, not only revealed His Son *to* the Apostle, but *in* him. He was smitten to the ground by the effulgent glory of the Redeemer, and his mortal eyes became blind ; but, he saw Jesus with the eye of his soul,—had a revelation of Him *within*. This was, indeed, a grand revelation for Paul, for Jesus was “the desire of nations,” and nothing could more ennoble or enrapture the Apostle than to have made known to his heart, the beloved Son of the ever blessed God.

(b.) *The sphere of the revelation.*—The expression “*in me*,” shows that it was to the *moral* perceptions of the Apostle, that Christ was made known ; and this was better than any outward manifestation could

possibly be, the outward eyes and ears of Paul had seen and heard many evidences of the validity of the claims of Jesus to Messiahship, but they had failed to convince and convert him; but, now that his *heart* is opened, and revelation is made there, he has no doubts, and finds no difficulty in surrendering himself up to the sway of the Saviour. His cry is, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" and, being ready to do the will of Christ, he had revelations of the glory of Christ, and evidences of the divinity of His Person and mission. This is the best and brightest of all Christian evidences. There are no apologetics so convincing and comforting as this, the man who has Christ revealed *in* him, to his inner consciousness and experience, will have stronger and firmer ground to stand on, than the mere intellectual controversialist, who is armed *cap à pié* with arguments about External and Internal Evidences. Christ comes to those who love Him, and manifests Himself to them, as He does not unto the world; He becomes revealed in the holy of holies of a man's own soul, and the spiritual affinities and faculties lay hold on Him there. It was not enough that Jesus, in the days of His flesh, was revealed *to* men; many saw Him, and His mighty works, and did not believe; it was necessary then, as now, that He should be revealed *in* the soul. By resting in Christ, more than by reasoning about Him, Christianity is to be proved; experience is the best experiment in testing truth; the seat of satisfaction must be in the heart, more than in the head. That man has had the grandest revelation Earth can know, who can adopt sincerely the words of the apostle, and say "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me."

II. THE GLORIOUS SOURCE FROM WHICH THAT REVELATION CAME.—The change in the apostle's life, had not resulted from some hallucination, some messianic conception, the creation of his own spiritual aspirations; but had resulted from a direct revelation from heaven, vouchsafed by Almighty God. Paul had not desired, demanded, or deserved it; the revelation came to him, at an unexpected place, and time; he was the most unlikely man of his age to pass over from the ranks of the opponents, to those of the advocates of the Cross. It was well for the apostle, and the world, that he should thus have clear and confident assurance, that he had been really converted, and specially selected to be the apostle to the Gentiles, (a) *that he might speak and write unhesitatingly about Divine things; and, (b.) that the Churches might have no misgivings in accepting him and his teaching.* All real conversions are of God, though all are not so sudden, and ascertainable, as to time and place as was that of Paul's. Like the invisible and untraceable wind, the spirit moves on human hearts unseen, and often unknown by mortal sense; but it is God who opens blind spiritual eyes, and reveals His Son in contrite souls. Ordinarily, God works in connection with human means: but, whatever the means used to obtain the Divine blessing, and whatever the channel through which it may come, we ought to trace it up to God, as its source, and centre.

No wonder Paul could expatiate so glowingly upon the excellencies of Jesus, and His Gospel, when he had had so Divine a revelation made *within* him. The historic Christ of his Epistles is identical with the Christ of the Evangelists; showing it was the "same Jesus" revealed to him, who was—as it were—born

out of due time, as was revealed to the disciples, who were chosen by the Master, that they might be with Him.

Let us be thankful, that Christ may not only be revealed *to* us in the Gospels, but He may be revealed *in* us, by the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us. These revelations will be made *within* us, in seasons of earnest effort, when we are endeavouring to obey God's will, and in seasons of retirement and reflection, when we are musing upon the loving kindness of the Redeemer. He will make our hearts burn within us, and open to us the Scriptures, so that *in* us, we may apprehend Him, when *to* us, He may not be consciously near.

CONCLUSION.—Learn the crown and climax of human life is to have Christ revealed *in* us, and to be in Him, as the branches are in the vine. Such experiences will lift the soul above the petty and paltry pleasures of the present life; and, will be *preparatory* to, and *predictive* of, the clearer and fuller revelation of heaven, where we shall see the King in His beauty, and sing His praises for ever and ever.

F. W. BROWN.

CHRISTIANITY.—Though Christianity be as generally professed and clearly taught amongst us as ever it was it was in any nation, there are but few who are ever the better for it, the most being here also as bad, both in their principles and practices as they which live in the darkest corners of the earth, where the light of the Gospel never yet shined. The far greater part of the people in this kingdom know little or nothing of the religion they profess, but only to profess it as the religion of the country wherein they live. They may perhaps be very zealous for it (as all people are for the religion in which they are born and bred), but take no care to frame their lives according to it, because they were never rightly informed about it.—*Beveridge*.

Germes of Thought.

THE PREACHER'S FINGER-POST.

Paul's Treatment of Self-conceited Teachers.

"WE ARE FOOLS FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, BUT YE ARE WISE IN CHRIST; WE ARE WEAK, BUT YE ARE STRONG; YE ARE HONOURABLE, BUT WE ARE DESPISED. EVEN UNTO THIS PRESENT HOUR WE BOTH HUNGER, AND THIRST, AND ARE NAKED, AND ARE BUFFETED, AND HAVE NO CERTAIN DWELLING PLACE; AND LABOUR, WORKING WITH OUR OWN HANDS: BEING REVILED WE BLESS; BEING PERSECUTED, WE SUFFER IT; BEING DEFAMED, WE INTREAT; WE ARE MADE AS THE FILTH OF THE WORLD, AND ARE THE OFFSCOURING OF ALL THINGS UNTO THIS DAY. I WRITE NOT THESE THINGS TO SHAME YOU, BUT AS MY BELOVED SONS I WARN YOU."—1 *Cor.* iv. 10-14.

PAUL is still thinking of those teachers of the Corinthian Church who were "puffed up," inflated with conceit. He treats them here with—

I.—AN IRONIC APPEAL.
 "We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised." Or "ye have

glory, but we have dishonour." "We are fools," we know nothing, "but ye are wise," you know everything, "we are weak," timid, and feeble, "but ye are strong," and fearless. "Ye are honourable," you have "glory," you are thought a deal of, you are extolled, but "we are despised," the "off-scouring of all things."

* For treatment of verse 9 see "Homilist," vol. xxxii., p. 243

All this is sarcasm again, well deserved, and well directed. How would our little penny-a-liners feel if such a man as Thomas Carlyle were to stand before them and speak in this way? If they had any sense remaining they would quiver into nothingness. How much more would those small pretentious teachers in the Corinthian Church feel this stroke of satire dealt out to them by the grand apostle to the Gentiles! He treats them here with—

II.—A PERSONAL HISTORY. Here he refers to his *privations*. “Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place,”—without nourishment, without clothing, without the shelter of a home. Here he refers to his *labours*. “And labour, working with our own

hands.” Here he refers to his *persecutions*. “We are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things.” Then he refers to the *spirit* in which he endured the sufferings, “Being reviled we bless, being persecuted we suffer it, being defamed we intreat.” Now why did he state all this? Not for the sake of parading his great trials and toils, but for the sake of bringing these proud teachers to their senses. They could not fail to acknowledge that he was an apostle—a pre-eminent minister of Christ; notwithstanding this, in the world he was treated with cruelty and contempt, he was poor and despised. What, then, had they to be proud of as ministers?

CONCLUSION :— From this subject it is natural to ask, who in the present age engaged in the Christian ministry, are

most likely to be of *Apostolic Succession*? Those who are "full" and "rich," and royal, and "wise," and "strong," who pride themselves in all these things; whom the people favour and flatter? or those who, like the Apostle Paul, in the discharge of their ministry, endure privations, persecutions, and all in the

magnanimous spirit of self-abnegation and generous forgiveness of enemies? Call no man a successor of the apostle who has not the apostolic character. To call a man a successor of the apostle who has not the apostolic character—manfully noble, Christly royal, and withal self-sacrificing—is a mischievous imposture.

The Ideal Church a Tribunal.

"DARE ANY OF YOU HAVING A MATTER AGAINST ANOTHER," &c.—
1 Cor. vi. 1-8.

In our sketch on the preceding verses we looked on the true Church as a *feast*. Here we have to look on it as a *tribunal*, a court of judicature, where disputes are to be settled and grievances redressed. It would appear that questions arose among the Corinthian Christians that required settlement, questions of wrong done to persons or

to property, and that too the litigious spirit was so rife in their midst, that they took their grievances to the heathen courts. For this the apostle reproves them. "Dare any of you having a matter against another go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?" Three remarks about the ideal Church as a tribunal—

I. IT IS ABOVE ALL OTHER TRIBUNALS ON THE EARTH. First: It is a court *formed of morally righteous men*. This is implied in the words, "Dare any of you having a matter against another go to law before the unjust and not before the *saints*?" Saints or just men form the tribunal. In worldly courts of judicature men are judged by legislative enactments or judicial decisions. Not so in this court. It is a court of equity, a court that tries cases not by statutory precepts, nor by ecclesiastical laws, but by Scriptural principles, and these principles as they are embodied in the teaching of Him who delivered the sermon on the mount. The true church is His representative and administrator. Secondly: It is a court whose *jurisdiction is universal*. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?"

In many ways men of Christly lives are judging the *world* now. Their ideas of right and wrong, between man and man, and man and God, form that standard of character to which the consciences of men are constantly appealing, and to which they are forced to bow. All men at last will be judged by the character of Christ, and the Church is the representative of that character. "The words I say unto you they shall judge you in the last day." Not only does this Church tribunal judge the world but judges *angels* also. "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" Redeemed humanity is in some respects higher than angelic natures. It has passed through greater changes, and is brought into closer connection with the Divine. They who have in them the spirit of absolute justice in the highest measure

are the best judges of character. In modern courts this spirit is often very feeble and in some cases extinct. Hence the sad blunderings about the interpretation of statutes and the decisions of judges. But the spirit of absolute justice reigns in the true Church. Another remark suggested is —

II. It is a tribunal for the SETTLEMENT OF ALL DISPUTES. Paul intimates that it is to judge disputes on the “smallest matters,” and of “things pertaining to this life.” These expressions seem to comprehend all disputes, not merely religious but secular, not only disputes on great subjects, but disputes on minor subjects as well. The instinct of Christly justice which inspires it, peers into the heart of all moral conduct. It has an “anointing from the Holy One by which it knows all things.” The more spiritually pure a

man is the more readily will he detect the wrong. Only a few years ago some of our judges occupied twelve months or more, at an enormous expense to the nation, in order to find out whether a man was an impostor or not. To a mind full of moral justice an impostor is detected instinctively and at once. No logic can read the hidden principles of a man's heart. Christ knew “what was in man,” and those highly imbued with His spirit are to some extent gifted with the same insight. Another remark suggested is —

III. DISPUTANTS WHO WILL NOT HAVE THEIR CASES SETTLED IN THIS COURT ARE JUSTLY LIABLE TO APPROACH. First: Reference to another court is *unwise*. “If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life set them to judge who are least esteemed in the Church.” The meaning is, any other court to

which the case is taken is of no account in the estimation of the Church, it is a morally inferior institution. The tribunal of man in comparison to Christ's tribunal is a truly contemptible thing. You Christians degrade yourselves by taking disputes to such tribunals. "I speak to your shame. Is it so that there is not a wise man among you?" It is a shame to you to have your disputes carried to such tribunals, a shame that you cannot settle your disputes among yourselves, that "brother should go to law with brother before the unbelievers." Secondly : Reference to another court is *wrong*. "Now, therefore there is utterly a fault (a defect) among

you because ye go to law one with another." Better than to do this, better than to go to a worldly tribunal, to settle your disputes, better you should suffer wrong than take your grievance into the worldly courts. "The Church has principles," says Robertson, "according to which all such matters may be set at rest. And the difference between the worldly court of justice and the Christian court of arbitration is a difference of diametrical opposition. Law says you shall have your rights, the spirit of the true Church says, defraud not your neighbour of *his* rights. Law says, you must not be wronged, the Church says it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong."

GOD'S LOVE.

"With God 'tis one
 To guide a sunbeam or create a sun—
 To rule ten thousand, thousand worlds or more.
 Go worlds ! said God, but learn ere ye depart
 Thy favored temple is an humble heart."—*Festus*.

Seeds of Sermons on St. Paul's Epistle to Philippians.

Having gone through all the verses in the Epistle to the Ephesians (see "Homilist," Vol. xxii. to xxviii.), we proceed to develope, with our usual brevity, the precious germs of truth contained in this letter. The following remarks, as a standing introduction, may contribute some portion of light to the whole Epistle:—Notice (1) *The residence of the persons addressed.* Philippi—whose ancient name was Crenides—was a city of Macedonia, and called after the name of Philip of Macedon, because he rebuilt and fortified it. B.C. 356, and afterwards colonised by Julius Cæsar, who invested the population with the privilege of a Roman City. It was the first place in Europe where the Gospel was preached by Paul, an account of which we have in the sixteenth chapter of the Acts. It was during his second missionary tour, and about A.D. 53.—Notice (2) *The occasion of the Epistle.* The contributions which the Philippians had made towards supplying the Apostle's necessities when a prisoner at Rome, evidently prompted its production.—Notice (3) *The scene from which the Epistle was addressed.* That it was from Rome where he was a prisoner is clear, from chapters i. 1-13, iv. 22. It would seem from the Epistle that he was expecting a speedy decision of his case, and hoped to obtain his release. Epaphroditus had been despatched to him from the Philippian Church with pecuniary contributions for the Apostle's relief, and on his return the Apostle entrusted this letter for conveyance. This would be about A.D. 63.—Notice (4) *The general character of the Epistle.* It is all but free from any censure, and breathes a warm and generous feeling through every part. The Epistle gives us the impression that the Philippian Church was one of the most pure, consistent, and generous, of that age. About 40 or 50 years after this Epistle was written, we are informed that Ignatius, on his way to martyrdom passed through Philippi, and was most warmly received in that city.]

No. XIV.

True Labourers for Christ,

"YET I SUPPOSED IT NECESSARY TO SEND TO YOU EPAPHRODITUS,"
&c.—*Phil.* ii. 25-30.

Epaphroditus, it would seem, had been sent from the Church at Philippi to Paul at Rome, with supplies for his temporal necessities. In the execution of his commission he had fallen sick, and now having reached convalescence, he longed to return home in order to relieve the anxieties of his friends, who had heard of his indisposition.

The text presents to us two *genuine*, if not model,

workers for Christ,—men thoroughly imbued with the Christly spirit, and subject to those trials which generally attend in this world, the faithful discharge of the Gospel mission. In them we discover—

I. A FEELING OF SPIRITUAL EQUALITY. Paul speaks of Epaphroditus as "my brother," "my companion," or, as in the New Version, "my fellow-worker," and "my fellow-soldier." Whatever difference

existed in their natural or acquired abilities, their worldly position and social standing, a sense of spiritual equality possessed and ruled them. They were children of the same Great Father, labourers in the same great cause, soldiers in the same moral campaign,—a campaign against the evils—physical, intellectual, social, and moral—that afflict the world. Where is this sense of spiritual equality displayed now amongst those who profess to be labourers of Christ?

What would be thought of an archbishop writing a letter to a Church concerning a primitive local preacher, a true labourer withal, with these words, “my brother, my labourer, my fellow-soldier,” receive him with all gladness and hold such in reputation? Such conduct from the primate would shock the fawning sycophancy which is too rampant in Church and State. We discover here—

II. A SENTIMENT OF TENDER SYMPATHY. Here is sympathy manifested by three parties, First: By the *Philippian Church towards Paul*. Touched with Paul’s wretched condition in Rome, a prisoner lacking food, they sent Epaphroditus to him with means of relief, made him the “messenger” of charity. Here is sympathy

shown, Secondly: By *Epaphroditus towards the Philippian Church*. Paul says, “He longed after you all, and was full of heaviness.” Why was he “full of heaviness,” or in sore trouble? It does not say that it was on his own account, but because “Ye had heard he had been sick.” He was afraid that the tidings which they had received of his indisposition would distress them with anxieties, and he hurries home to relieve them. Here is sympathy shown, Thirdly: By *Paul for both*. “I sent him therefore the more carefully (diligently), that when ye see him again ye may rejoice, and that ye may be the less sorrowful.” As if he had said, I want your sorrows removed, for in your sorrows, I sorrow. How beautiful, thrice beautiful, is all this! How rare, withal, how Christly! Nay, there is no Christliness without it. Unless Christianity unites all souls in this living sympathy, it has failed in its mission. All true disciples are members of one body, of which Christ is the Head, and what one feels, all feel, and they rejoice with those that rejoice, and weep with those that weep. We discover here—

III. A CONDITION OF TRYING AFFLICTION. Paul was a sufferer. He was not only a

prisoner at Rome, awaiting a terrible fate, but in actual "need," dependent on the charity of others. Epaphroditus had been in sore affliction, "nigh unto death." Now it is worthy of note that the affliction that came on both these men, came on them in consequence of their Christianity. One might have thought that their Christianity, their generosity, purity, and moral nobleness, would have guarded them from even the common ills of life. Not so. Paul knew that such afflictions were to be expected, and elsewhere he says, "No man should be moved by these afflictions. Ye yourselves know that ye are appointed thereunto." Afflictions, however, that come in this way are distinguished from all other afflictions in two respects, First: They have a *disciplinary influence*. They are not judicial penalties, but parental chastisements. They cleanse, they spiritualise, they ennoble the soul. Secondly: They have *Divine supports*. So abundant are the consolations they experience that they "glory in tribulation," &c. We discover here—

IV. A REALISATION OF DIVINE MERCY. "For indeed he was sick, nigh unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not on

him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow." He ascribes both the restoration of Epaphroditus to health, and his own deliverance from the terrible "sorrow" which would have befallen himself had his friend expired, to the mercy of God. Not to any secondary instrumentality, not to the value of their services in the cause of Christ, but to mercy. A practical realisation of Divine mercy is at once a sign and element of vital Christianity. In the gift of life there is mercy, in the sustentation of life there is mercy, in the afflictions of life there is mercy, to a Christian all is mercy. We discover here—

V. A RIGHT TO CHRISTIAN REGARD. "Receive him, therefore, in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such in reputation, because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life to supply your lack of service toward me." First: *Give him a hearty reception*. "Receive him, therefore, in the Lord with all gladness." Welcome him, not with mere conventional civility and social politeness, but with exultant affection. Secondly: *Treat him with honour*. "Hold such in reputation." He is a noble man, treat him as a

noble man should be treated. The honour which is paid to worldly men on account of their wealth, their grandeur and position, is a spurious honour, is flunkeyism. There can be no true honour where there is not the honour-worthy, and the honour-worthy implies moral excellence. Thirdly: *Do all this because he deserves it.* "Because for the work of

Christ he was nigh unto death." He is thoroughly disinterested, he suffered and risked his life, not from any personal motives, but from the inspiration of Christian love and charity. Disinterestedness is the soul of virtue, and the only foundation of greatness. A disinterested man has a right to Christian regard, aye more to enthusiastic reception.

Seeds of Sermons

FROM THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS.

WORLDLY ROYALTY AND PERSONAL GODLINESS.

"AND THEY SAID UNTO HIM, THERE CAME A MAN UP TO MEET US, AND SAID UNTO US, GO, TURN AGAIN UNTO THE KING THAT SENT YOU, AND SAY UNTO HIM, THUS SAITH THE LORD, IS IT NOT BECAUSE THERE IS NOT A GOD IN ISRAEL, THAT THOU SENDEST TO INQUIRE OF 'BAAL-ZEBUB, THE GOD OF EKRON? THEREFORE THOU SHALT NOT COME DOWN FROM THAT BED ON WHICH THOU ART GONE UP, BUT SHALT SURELY DIE.'"—2. *Kings* i, 6.

(Read the whole paragraph, verses 1 to 8.)

This verse, and the whole of the preceding verses, bring under our notice, two subjects of thought: worldly royalty in a humiliating condition and

personal godliness divinely majestic.

I. WORLDLY ROYALTY IN A HUMILIATING CONDITION. First: Here is a king in *mortal suffering.*

“And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick.” Nature has no more respect for kings than for beggars; her laws treat them as ordinary mortals. Secondly: Here is a king in *mental distress*. On his bed of suffering the king’s mind was most painfully exercised as to what would be the issue of his bodily suffering. He sends messengers to the idols in order to ask whether “I shall recover of this disease.” No doubt the fear of death distressed him. Thirdly: Here is a king in *superstitious darkness*. He had no knowledge of the true God, no enlightened religious feeling, and he sent his messenger to an idol—the god of flies—to know whether he should recover or not. What a humiliating condition for royalty to be in! And yet it is a condition in which kings and princes are often found. The other subject of thought here is—

II. PERSONAL GODLINESS
DIVINELY MAJESTIC. Elijah is an example of personal godliness, though, in a worldly sense, he was very poor, and his costume seemed to be almost the meanest of the mean. “He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins.” But see the majesty of this man in two things. First: In *receiving communications from heaven*. “But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite.” A truly godly man is ever in correspondence with heaven; his “conversation is in heaven.” See his majesty, Secondly: In *reproving the king*. “Is it not because there is not a God in Israel that thou sendest to enquire of Baalzebub, the God of Ekron?” The thing called religion in England is just strong enough to reprove the poor, but too weak to thunder reproof into the ear of the corrupt and pleasure-seeking monarchs. In his reproof he pronounces on him the divine judgment, “Thou shalt not come down from

sudden death, sometimes that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die."

CONCLUSION.—Which is the better do you think—

a throne or a godly character? Fools only prefer the former; the man of sense, thoughtfulness, and reflection would say the latter.

MAN IN THREE ASPECTS.

"THEN THE KINGS SENT UNTO HIM A CAPTAIN OF FIFTY," &c.— 2 *Kings* i. 9-18.

In this paragraph we have man in three aspects.

I. MAN RUINED THROUGH THE CONDUCT OF OTHERS. The messengers which the king sent to Elijah of one hundred each on three different occasions were all destroyed by lightning. This awful judgment came upon them not merely on their own account, although, like all sinners, they had forfeited their lives to eternal justice, but as messengers of the king. Throughout the human race, in all races and times, there are found millions groaning under the trials and sufferings brought on them by the conduct of others. In this world the inno-

cent suffer for the guilty; the "fathers eat sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." (This subject is discussed in "Homilist," vol. ix. page 277.) We have here—

II. MAN EMPLOYED AS THE EXECUTOR OF DIVINE JUSTICE. These hundreds of men, messengers from the king, were struck down by Elijah at the command of God. There was no personal vengeance in the act. Elijah was used as the organ of heaven. God's plan in this world is to punish as well as to save man by man. How was Pharaoh punished, and the Canaanites, &c.? By man. Sinful nations are punished, often by worthless kings

and ruthless despots. We have here—

III. MAN STEPPING INTO THE PLACE OF THE DEAD. The King Ahaziah dies, Jehoram steps into his place. “So he died according to the word of the Lord which Elijah had spoken, and Jehoram reigned in his stead.” “One generation cometh and another passeth away.” Places, positions,

and the various offices of life are no sooner vacated by death than they are stepped into by others. Thus the world goes on, and the dead are soon forgotten. The greatest man on earth to-day is but a mere bubble on the great river of human life; he sparkles for a moment and is lost for ever in the abyss.

The Departure of Good Men.

“AND IT CAME TO PASS WHEN THE LORD WOULD TAKE UP ELIJAH UNTO HEAVEN.”—2 *Kings* ii. 1-17.

Two subjects are here presented for notice—

I.—THE DEPARTURE OF A GOOD MAN FROM THE EARTH. Death is a departure from the world, it is not an extinction, it is a mere change of place. There are two facts concerning Elijah's departure which mark the departure of all men. First: The *time* is of God. “It came to pass when the Lord would take up Elijah. There is an appointed time for man on the earth, when the hour is up, he must go, not before or after. Elijah's time had

come. There are no accidental deaths, no premature graves. “*Thou turnest man to destruction, Thou takest away his breath,*” &c. Secondly: The *manner* is of God. Elijah was to be taken away by a “whirlwind.” That was the method God appointed for him. He takes men away by various methods, sometimes by devastating winds, sometimes by scathing lightnings, sometimes by boisterous billows, sometimes by accident or starvation, sometimes by

prolonged disease, &c. All that is with Him. We are not the creatures of chance. He "careth for us;" for each, for all. Notice—

II. THE POWER OF GOODNESS IN A GOOD MAN'S DEPARTURE. See what a grand spirit Elijah displays in the immediate prospect of his exit. First: A spirit of *calm self-possession*. When Elijah knew of the solemn event awaiting him, how calmly he talked to Elisha, and wended his way to Bethel, according to the Divine commandment. There was no excitement or perturbation, he moves and talks with a majestic calmness. Religion alone can give this peace. "He will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Him." Here is, Secondly: A spirit of strong *social interest*. See how it affected Elisha. How tenderly and strongly he felt bound to him. Elisha says, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." He repeated this thrice. And when the sons of the prophets spoke

to him about it he said, "Hold ye your peace." As if he had said, I cannot bear to hear it. No doubt these sons of the prophets and all who came under the godly influence of Elijah felt thus bound to him. There is no power by which one man can link another so closely and mightily to him as the power of goodness. Goodness is a mighty magnet. Here is Thirdly: A spirit of *far-reaching philanthropy*. Elijah goes to Bethel, but wherefore? Probably to deliver a valedictory address to the "Sons of the prophets." They were in College there, in the college, perhaps which Elijah himself had founded. Would that his address had been reported! His great solicitude was that these young men should hand down the religion of God to the men of coming times. The spirit of genuine religion is not a narrow spirit, a spirit confined to a church, a country or a period, but a spirit that embraces in its loving sympathies the spiritual interests of the race.

Homiletical Breviaries.

Apostolic Treatment of Vanity.

“NOW YE ARE FULL, NOW YE ARE RICH, YE HAVE REIGNED AS KINGS WITHOUT US: AND I WOULD TO GOD YE DID REIGN, THAT WE ALSO MIGHT REIGN WITH YOU.”—1 *Cor.* iv. 8.

Vanity is a state of mind at once the most prevalent and detestable, it is a plant that springs from self-ignorance, and is disgusting to the spectator in all its forms and fruits. See how the apostle treats it here.—

I. With WITHERING SARCASM. “Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us.” The Bible furnishes us with many instances of irony (See 1 Kings xviii. 27; Job xii. 2), but no where have we it in language more full and forceful than here. “Now ye are full,” or “already are ye filled.” You have had enough, you want nothing, “ye are rich” or “Already ye are become rich.” You are affluent in all gifts and graces. “Ye have reigned as kings without us.” “Here are three metaphors, the first taken from persons filled with food, the second from persons so rich that they required no more, the third from those who have reached the highest elevation, obtained a throne.” Paul seems to say to these conceited teachers that they were so great that they did not require such services as his. We scarcely know of a more effective way of treating vanity than by sarcasm. Treat the vain, swaggering man before you not according to your judgment of him, but according to his estimate of himself. Speak to him as one as stupendous as he believes himself to be, and your irony will stab him to the quick. Sarcasm often becomes the instrument of a great manly soul roused into indignation. The apostle here treats vanity—II. With A NOBLE GENEROSITY. “I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.” Or, “I would ye did reign.” Here the north wind of sarcasm gives way to the south breezes of love. What he means is a wish that they were as truly full, rich, and royal as they thought themselves to be. The irony of a Christly man, however pungent, is not malign, but generous.

Ridicule.

‘AND HE WENT UP FROM THENCE UNTO BETH-EL: AND AS HE WAS GOING UP BY THE WAY, THERE CAME FORTH LITTLE CHILDREN OUT OF THE CITY, AND MOCKED HIM, AND SAID UNTO HIM, GO UP, THOU BALD HEAD; GO UP, THOU BALD HEAD. AND HE TURNED BACK, AND LOOKED ON THEM, AND CURSED THEM IN THE NAME OF THE LORD. AND THERE CAME FORTH TWO SHE BEARS OUT OF THE WOOD, AND TOOK FORTY AND TWO CHILDREN OF THEM. AND HE WENT FROM THENCE TO MOUNT CARMEL, AND FROM THENCE HE RETURNED TO SAMARIA.’—2 Kings ii. 23-25.*

These verses lead us to consider ridicule in three aspects. I. INFAMOUSLY DIRECTED. First: Directed against an old man, on account of his *supposed personal defects*. “Go up, thou bald head.” This meant, perhaps, “Go up, as Elijah has gone, if thou canst, we want to get rid of thee.” Though baldness of the head is not always a sign of age, Elisha was undoubtedly far advanced in years. Nothing is more contemptible or absurd than to ridicule people on account of constitutional defects, whether of body or mind. Direct the shafts of ridicule, if you like, against defects of moral character, against vanity and pride, sensuality, &c., but never against constitutional defects, that is impious, for no man can make one hair white or black, or add a cubit to his stature. Here is ridicule: Secondly: Directed against an old man of most *distinguished excellence*. Elisha was a man of God, and everything concerning him shows manifestations of a godly character. To ridicule a good man is not only more impious, but more absurd, than to laugh to scorn the very sun in its brightness. Here is ridicule—Thirdly: Directed against an old man *engaged in a mission of mercy*. He was heaven’s messenger of mercy to his country. He came to Bethel to bestow wise counsels on the sons of the prophets in their seminary, and to bless all who would listen to his counsels. How often has ridicule been thus infamously directed. Christ Himself was once its victim, aye, its chief victim. “They that passed by wagged their heads,” &c. They put on Him a “crown of thorns.” We have ridicule here—II. MALEVOLENTLY INSPIRED. The animus in this ridicule was that of an intolerant religion. There were two schools of religion in Bethel, two rival sects, one was the religion of the true God, and the other that of idolatry. One of Jeroboam’s calves was there established as the object of worship. There is no malevolence

* For remarks on verses 19-22, see “Homilist,” Vol. xxxix., p. 46.

so inveterate and ruthless as that inspired by false religion and rival sects. Perhaps these children had not this infernal passion to any extent, but were the mere instruments of their intolerant parents. Probably their parents sent them out now to meet the prophet and put the very words into their mouths, taught them with what notes, grimace, and attitude they should ring them out. This ridiculing the men of God was one of the crying sins of Judea. "They mocked the messengers of God and despised his words, and misused his prophets" (2 Chron. xxxvi. 16). These children were but the echoes and the instruments of their parents' religious malignant intolerance. We have ridicule here: III. TERRIBLY PUNISHED. "And he turned back and looked on them and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them." First: They were punished by the *will of the prophet*. He "cursed them." Perhaps there is no arrow more poignant than that of ridicule. One might have thought, however, that one of Elisha's moral strength and stature would not have felt it at all, especially when directed by children. But he knew their ridicule was but the ridicule of their fathers and mothers, and, perhaps, of the townspeople in general, who were all about him, and his righteous indignation was enkindled. The more loving a man is the more fierce his wrath rages when set on fire, the "wrath of the Lamb" is the most tremendous wrath in the universe. Secondly: They were punished by the *justice of God*. The prophet's indignation was righteous, and because it was righteous, the justice of God sanctioned it by causing "two she bears out of the wood to tare forty and two children of them." This was a tremendous homily of divine justice to the whole population, a sermon that would thunder in the hearts of the fathers, the mothers, and the neighbours.

CONCLUSION: Take care how you use your faculty of ridicule. It is a useful faculty in its place. Its scorching sarcasm has withered to the roots many a noxious weed, its satire has humbled to the dust, has struck to the earth many a proud and haughty soul. Elijah used it on Carmel's brow, Job used it to his arrogant friends, and Paul to the conceited members of the Corinthian Church. Ridicule rightly inspired and directed is—

"A whip of steel, that can with a lash
Imprint the character of shame so deep,
Ev'n in the brazen forehead of proud sin,
That not eternity shall wear it out."—*Randolph*.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end.
Since none can compass more than they intend.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST. By F. W. FARRAR, D.D., POPULAR EDITION,
London : Cassell, Peter & Galpin, Ludgate Hill.

No modern work is better known and more highly appreciated than this. There are few theological libraries we presume in England, on whose shelves it is not to be seen. Many thousands have read it, and have not only been charmed with the elegance of its diction, but have been inspired with the freshness of its thought and the loftiness of its religion. The subject is, of course, pre-eminent in importance. "In Him was light, and His life was the light of men." All theological systems, all ecclesiastical creeds, appear contemptible crudities in the light of Him who is the "Way, the Truth, and the Life." But although this work in former editions has been read by thousands, there are millions into whose dwellings it has not yet found an entrance, and that on account of its price. In the present form, in one small volume, its price is such that there are but few too poor to procure it. We are inclined to believe that those who may take it into their hands and begin to study its pages, will by reason of its heart-stirring incidents, transcendent themes, and fascinating style, not only read it through, but return again and again to its attractive pages. Most heartily do we recommend this priceless volume.

TREASURES OF THE TALMUD. Translated by PAUL ISAAC HERSHON.
WITH NOTES AND PREFACE by Rev. D. H. M. SPENCE, M.A.
London : Nisbet & Co., 21, Berners Street.

An extract from Canon Spence's preface will furnish the reader with an idea of the character and worth of this book. "The learned author of the *Treasures of the Talmud* has been for years engaged in the study of the vast collection of commentaries,

notes, reflections, and traditions, known as the Talmud—that strange, mysterious, mighty book, of which so many know the name, so few the contents. This volume will give the general reader some knowledge respecting the vast work, the extracts are well chosen and will, I think, excite great interest. The field is a new one, untrodden save by a few scholars. I cannot help feeling surprised, that in the present age, when commentaries on the Holy Scriptures are so sought after, that more attention has not been given, in the case of the Old Testament books to this most ancient and venerated work. It is no doubt full of wild tradition. It contains comments, many of them untrue and mischievous, but embedded in these the patient scholar will find many a gem of thought, many a beautiful story handed down from remote antiquity, many a wise saying spoken by the great teachers of the chosen people in far back days.” Our readers need not be reminded of the claims which the Talmud has to the deep and earnest study of every Biblical student. In this volume we have the treasures of that old and remarkable work brought together, and its subjects classified in alphabetical order. The able compiler and translator is entitled to the gratitude of all students of Biblical Scripture and Rabbinic lore.

THE FOUNDERS OF THE PRIMITIVE METHODIST CONNEXION: THEIR LIFE AND WORK. By THOMAS CHURCH. London: Primitive Methodist Book Room, Sutton Street, Commercial Road.

“This work,” says the author, “is an extended reply to many inquiries concerning the Primitive Methodist Connexion. Whence came it? Was its organisation necessary? Is it the fruit of secession? What doctrines do its members believe and teach? How is it governed? What are its forms of worship? Who are its agents, and how are they employed? Has it any missions? What has been its reception among men? Are its ministers men of letters? Can it record success? Have its operations escaped public criticism? What are its boundary lines to-day? How can these things be?” The author returns an answer to these questions, and the answer is not only clear, concise, and candid, but truly wonderful in some respects. Here is the history of a poor man technically uneducated, not gifted with genius, and distinguished by no great natural ability, who commenced his Christian

life about seventy-three years ago, who originated Primitive Methodism, whose adherents number, we imagine, about 200,000, and those 200,000 are amongst the most earnest, self-denying, and successful, of all the labourers in the field of Gospel truth and philanthropic enterprise. They are found in every district of the country. Like their Master they descend to the "lower parts of the earth," the lowest social strata, and there amongst the indigent, the ignorant, and oppressed, win souls. According to the rate in which they have been increasing, they bid fair to out-number the members of the old Methodist Connexion in a few years at most, and to take a front place amongst the Churches of the land. Some of their preachers are scholars, many of them may be ranked amongst the greatest preachers of the age, and all of them seem aflame with love to Christ. Our limits will only allow us to call attention to this volume, every page of which is fraught with interest, written with accuracy, and a subdued passion which often glows into eloquent sentences and paragraphs. The book is a chapter in ecclesiastical history second to few in interest and merit.

THE VERY WORDS OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.
 London: Henry Frowde, 7, Paternoster Row.

No words like the words of Christ, they are the *testing* words. By them the words both of the Old Testament, and the Epistles must be tried. We are not to interpret Christ either by the prophets or apostles, but them by Him. No man, no prophet or apostle "hath seen God at any time, the only begotten of the Father He hath declared Him." No apostle, not even Paul, saw Him, but Christ did. Not only are they the testing words of all Scriptures, but they are *life-giving* words. "The words I speak unto you they are spirit and life." His words are Himself, the outgoings of Himself, and He is the Bible of humanity. Most happy was the thought of him (or her) who gathered those "Very Words" together in this volume. This little book should be in the ward of every hospital, in the cabin of every ship, in the chamber of every house. Most heartily do we recommend it.

THE REVISER'S ENGLISH. A Series of Criticisms by G.
 WASHINGTON MOON, F. R. S. L. London: Hatchards, Piccadilly.

That our readers may understand the nature of, and reason for this book, we shall leave the accomplished author to speak to them

in his own words. "I am surprised to find myself after a silence of fifteen years again engaged in a controversy on the Queen's English. I am not a lover of contention, but of peace. There was a time when I could say 'I delight in a wordy warfare with one who wields his weapons well,' but now my joy is not in the midst of battle but in the restfulness of the beautiful, the beautiful in deed, and in word. It may be that it is my excessive love of the beautiful which makes me so keenly sensitive to anything that mars it, and certainly it is the hope of preserving and perfecting that which is beautiful in our language that has impelled me to engage in the task of exposing the Reviser's errors in it in the New Testament—a task from which I should have shrunk were it not that I regard the Bible as the temple of God's Truth, and therefore a sacred sanctuary for the shrine of the beautiful, the defence of which is incumbent upon every man. The mind which allows itself complacently to delight in anything below the highest standard of excellence is thereby debasing its faculties; for we become assimilated to that which we worship, and are ennobled or debased by the influence of that upon which our minds dwell with satisfaction. From this circumstance arises the necessity of aiming at perfection in all things and if language is that which pre-eminently distinguishes man from the beast, the attainment of perfection in language is worthy of our most studious efforts. Language is the vehicle of thought: and in the Bible it is the vehicle of God's thoughts: therefore if perfection in language ought to be looked for anywhere, it ought to be looked for and found in the Bible. I *have* looked for it in the new translation and have not found it, hence these letters." The criticisms of Mr. Moon upon the Revisers' English, seem to us very searching and very just: anyhow they show that the work of the Revisers is not final, and that a better Revision must come before the old version be displaced.

PILGRIMS LAYS: WITH LEAVES FROM MY NOTE BOOK. SECOND SERIES,
By W. G. F. W. London: Williams & Strahan, 7, Lawrence
Lane, Cheapside.

Some of these "*Lays*" are very good, some are exceptionable, and a few are to us distasteful. We are not of those who believe in presenting Christ a sa Victim all blood and anguish to men. To sing

"Oh the agonies of Gethsemane
And the tortures of the Cross."

We feel this to be somewhat incongruous and even revolting. Paul said "Henceforth we know no man after the flesh, though we knew Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we Him no more." The spirit of Christ is Christ. Christ was rather a Victor than a Victim, the moral Commander of the people, the Captain of human Salvation. He does not want our tears of compassion, but our songs of adoration. Were we compiling a hymn book we should ask the author for permission to print a few of these productions, for they are beautiful in sentiment and-expression.

JUVENILE WIT AND HUMOUR. Collected and Edited by D. SHEARER, M.A. Ph.D. HOW THE FRENCH TOOK ALGIERS. Translated from the German by J. LATCHMORE. JIM'S TREASURE. By A. K. FORBES. THE BEST OF CHUMS AND OTHER STORIES. By ROBERT RICHARDSON, B.A. A LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER FOR A NIGHT, AND OTHER STORIES. By R. RICHARDSON, B.A. THE TWO BROTHERS. A LITTLE AUSTRALIAN GIRL, and JIM A LITTLE NIGGER. By R. RICHARDSON, B.A. Edinburgh : Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier.

We put these books together because they are all issued from one publishing house, and all addressed to one class, the young. The first, "*Juvenile Wit and Humour*," contains a large number of utterances from the lips of boys and girls that cannot fail to be amusing to their own class. The second is a historic story on, "*How the French took Algiers*," full of stirring incidents, and containing much useful information. The third, viz. "*Jim's Treasure*" belongs to the same class, it is a book with which a boy or girl would be greatly charmed and might be profited withal. "*The Best of Chums*."—This little volume contains a series of capital stories for boys, with a few striking illustrations. The other three volumes: "*A Lighthouse Keeper*," "*The Two Brothers*," and "*The Little Australian Girl*," are by the same author, and will scarcely fail to delight the young reader.

OLD PROVERBS WITH NEW PICTURES. By LIZZIE LAWSON. London : Cassell, Petter & Co.

This is an exquisite book for children. The coloured pictures are most attractively and artistically done. The proverbs are pretty well known and very wholesome, and most of the rhymes are very pleasant. Children will be delighted with this beautiful book.




Leading Homily.

THE BLASPHEMY OF DESPAIR.*

WITH REFERENCE TO TENNYSON'S RECENT POEM.

"DOST THOU STILL RETAIN THINE INTEGRITY? CURSE GOD AND DIE."—*Job* ii. 9.

OU will readily recognise these words as spoken by Job's wife, and in the form in which they stand in the authorised version they set forth an extreme case of despair, one for which there was no remedy seen but death. Critical exegesis, however, has been very busy with the language of this woman, and all kinds of alterations have been suggested. Dr. Conquest translated it "bless God and die," and as far as the actual meaning of the Hebrew word is concerned, this rendering is not altogether without warrant. *Bāh-rach'*, like several English words, is used in two opposite senses, and signifies either bless or curse, according to the context. One writer translates the passage, "Give thanks to God and die," and another, "Bid farewell to God and die." But having in view Job's reply, it is perfectly clear that such

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euphemistic renderings are innovations upon the true meaning of the text. The mildest reading that we could adopt, without destroying the full force of the controversy between Job and his wife, would be "Ignore God and die." But the rendering in the English version is perhaps to be preferred to any other. Clearly she had come to look upon the Almighty as unworthy of her husband's confidence, and quiet submission to such a Being as unreasonable, and she desired, therefore, that the patriarch should throw off all allegiance, express his resentment in maledictions of a fearful character, and send forth his soul in a desperate and blasphemous curse against his Maker. Nothing was left for him on earth; let him, therefore, banish trust, hope, and love together, hurl his petty vengeance against the tyrant by whose will he had to suffer, and cursing die. The language of this woman is that of utter despair, and she endeavours to bring her husband into the same unhappy frame of mind as that in which she finds herself. She does not deny God, but hates Him. All trust and confidence has fled—if she ever had any—and she has taken one desperate plunge, into what Shakspeare calls—

"The swallowing gulf
Of dark oblivion and deep despair."

Job's wife is typical of a class of persons that has always existed in this world. No age or nation has been exempt from them. The slime of their track runs down all the centuries, and is spread over every land. They abound in the world of fact, and are plentifully distributed over the domain of fiction. Such persons lose sight of all that is bright in life, hem themselves

in with the blackest gloom, seek a path only in the darkness where no star shines, allow distrust to take entire possession of their souls, and hatred to reign supreme in the domain of their affections, and then end their career like Pope's reprobate knight, of whom the poet says—

“And sad Sir Balaam curses God and dies.”

One of the heroes described by Smollett, sinks under calamity, gives way to despondency, and ultimately becomes a prey to utter despair. “I cursed,” says he, “the hour of my birth, the parents that gave me being, the sea that did not swallow me up, the poignard of the enemy which could not find the way to my heart . . . and in the ecstasy of despair resolved to lie still where I was and perish.” So Dr. J. G. Holland makes one of his characters give expression to his feelings in such words as these—

“Oh man who begot me! Oh woman who bore!

Why, why did you call me to being and breath?

With ruin behind me, and darkness before,

I have nothing to long for, or live for but death.”

And George Eliot, in *Scenes of Clerical Life*, makes Janet Dempster talk in a similar strain. “You are tired of hearing me,” she tells her mother, “you are cruel like the rest! every one is cruel in this world. Nothing but blame, blame, blame—never any pity. God is cruel to have sent me into this world to have borne all this misery.” And when she is informed that she should not speak in this way, but be thankful for the gift of life, she retorts, “Thankful for life! why should I be thankful? God has made me with a heart to feel, and He has sent me nothing but misery . . . There's no help for me, no hope. I can't kill myself; I've

tried, but I can't leave this world and go to another. There may be no pity for me there, as there is none here." Fortunately in this case Janet in the end escapes from this gloom of despair into a brighter region, from which she can look back upon the dreary past with sorrow, that she had ever been in such angry moods.

In human life we often meet with persons whose gloomy minds throw a shadow on everything with which they come into contact, who are ever bordering on despair if they never quite reach it, who can see no good in human life, and no beauty in God's world, who fancy that all that happens to them is for the worst, and are ever therefore indulging in what has been aptly called "a senseless screech against God." Such despair is the rankest of all blasphemy. For as Shakspeare has wisely said :

"What ! we have many goodly days to see :
The liquid drops of tears that you have shed,
Shall come again transformed to orient pearl ;
Advantaging their loan with interest,
Of ten times double gain of happiness."

The recent poem of Mr. Tennyson has set forth despair in all its hideous ugliness. His picture is a most graphic one, such as few men could paint, but its intense realism serves but to increase the horror one experiences at gazing upon it. We feel that the hero deserves some sympathy, and yet while we pity him we stand aghast at his attitude towards God and the universe, and the fearful language in which he indulges. His sufferings are terrible, and beyond endurance, but their outcome is a senseless boiling cauldron of maledictions against that which alone could have soothed

the troubled waters of his soul, and calmed the un-earthly turbulence of his mind. He flings insane curses abroad which can only recoil upon himself; and the wild and purposeless fury which he sends forth, cuts off the stream of sympathy which would otherwise flow to him from his kind. A poor victim of sorrow and suffering he is without doubt, but withal he is a raving maniac, breaking himself upon the wheels of what he conceives to be his destiny, like a wild beast tearing to pieces its own body against the bars of its cage.

The terrible picture drawn by the poet is probably copied from life, but it is a very sad one, and one which we trust is seen but seldom in the world of fact. 'Tis true that Pessimism—a hideous monstrosity of infernal birth—flourishes to-day as a philosophy, and finds no lack of theoretical advocates, but it is to be hoped that it has after all but few who are practically influenced by it. The world is bad enough in sober truth, but to close one's eyes to all that is good and lovely in human life, is to revel over the repulsive scenes of the Lazar house, and to declare that there is no such thing as health—to estimate men's sanity by the denizens of a lunatic asylum, and to measure the nation's virtue by the worst criminals in a gaol. We protest against Pessimism as being false in theory, and impossible in practice. Even dark things have a bright side, which can be seen if looked for in a proper spirit. Shakspeare has told us—and the philosophy in his words is very sound—that

“There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
Would men observingly distil it out.”

I. THE CAUSES OF DESPAIR. These are very numerous, and we can therefore only glance at some of them.

Despair is a noxious, poisonous plant, striking its roots deep into human nature, and sending ramifications in all directions, wherever it finds a congenial soil; and such soil is frequently of our own making. Moreover, when the plant begins to grow we tend it, manure and water it, care for it, and watch over it as though it were the most lovely flower that blooms. Of its many causes let us notice a few.

1. *False views of God.* Nothing can be more clear than the fact that a man's theology very largely influences his life. Spiritual ideas are at the root of all others. Whatever a man thinks of God and of religion, will largely mould his character. The ancients were always to a great extent what they conceived their gods to be. For human life is, and ever must be, the outcome of religion, or the absence of it, irreligion. False views of God will, therefore, give erroneous views of duty, and of everything that falls within the sphere of human thought, and human action. We see this on all hands. Hence despair, such as that depicted by Tennyson, arises from two very opposite causes, or rather, from a similar cause, finding expression in two opposite forms. These are the Pessimism of men who have been sometimes called *Anti-Theists*, that is, opponents of God, or haters of God; and the hard, encrusted, stern, unbending Calvinism, which professes to be overpowered by God's love, which love is, however, always limited to those holding the doctrine. We see here a marvellous illustration of a very old proverb, which tells us that "extremes meet." (*a.*) The first of these classes profess to believe that everything in the world is arranged on the very worst possible plan. Evils abound everywhere for which no remedy exists.

Human life is a mistake, and all our hopes and aspirations a hollow mockery. Pliny set forth this view long ago in these words: "The vanity of man, and his insatiable longing after existence, have led him to dream of a life after death. A being full of contradictions, he is the most wretched of creatures, since the other creatures have no wants transcending the bounds of their nature. Man is full of desires and wants, that reach to infinity, and can never be satisfied. His nature is a lie—uniting the greatest poverty with the greatest pride. Among those so great evils, the best thing God has bestowed on man is the power to take his own life." While such views as these prevailed—and they were very common in ancient Rome—one does not wonder at the deep, dark, hopeless despair, that settled like a black cloud upon the people, and the extreme prevalence of suicide as the only means by which escape from the ills of life could be accomplished. In our own day we have this same monstrous doctrine again proclaimed. Says Schopenhauer—the great modern apostle of Pessimism, "Evil is real, colossal, incessant; the world is bad, it is a misery to have been born." "Life is the natural history of sorrow, it is the war of all against all, an internecine strife for ever removed from age to age, till the crust of the planet shall peel off piecemeal." Such notions must necessarily engender despair, for they shut out every spark of hope, and cover the soul with clouds of hell's own blackness. More than one modern poet has espoused this dismal philosophy, and become the advocate of a system over which Dante's line may be appropriately written:

"Abandon hope all you who enter here."

The hero of Tennyson's poem, seems to think God

hateful, because He does not remove the ills of human life, and hence the wild raving idiotic blasphemy which he hurls against heaven—

“And the suns of the limitless Universe sparkled and shone in the sky,

Flashing with fires as of God, but we knew that their light was a lie—

Bright as with deathless hope—but however they sparkled and shone,

The dark little worlds running round them, were worlds of woe like our own—

No soul in the heaven above, no soul on the earth below,

A fiery scroll written over with lamentation and woe.”

* * * * *

“Why should we bear with an hour of torture, a moment of pain

If any man die for ever if all his griefs are in vain,

And the homeless planet at length will be wheel'd thro' the silence of space

Motherless evermore of an ever-vanishing race.

When the worm shall have writhed its last, and its last brother worm will have fled

From the dead fossil skull that is left in the rocks of an earth that is dead?”

This Pessimistic raving is indicative of a despair which has taken a fixed and settled position in the soul. Hope has fled, and all the brightness, even to the last spark, has departed from life. Pity for such an one we must feel, and yet he writes his own condemnation. (b) But there is another kind of false conception of God, no less fatal to the soul's health than this one; although, as I have said, usually associated with very different persons and very opposite views, it is that which supposes that from all eternity God fore-ordained or fore-doomed millions of men to endless suffering for doing that which they were powerless to avoid, or for

not doing that for which they had neither inclination nor ability. And this latter frequently gives birth to the former—did so, in fact, in the hero of Tennyson's poem. The Calvinism of a past age is fast passing away, but it lingers yet in dark and benighted spots of our land. Hypers, as such persons are called, are by no means extinct. They may not to-day believe that infants a span long are writhing in the fires of hell, as was held by their predecessors, but the broad principle of their creed remains unchanged. They are the elect chosen by God from all eternity to occupy the chief places in the celestial mansions, whilst thousands of their fellow men are doomed by an irresistible and irreversible decree to suffer the pangs of inconceivable torment for ever and ever. They have no fear on their own account, and so far are not likely to despair. But should their sympathies widen, their charity increase, and their love for their fellow men grow stronger, a fearful collision must ensue between their affections and their creed, and unless the latter goes to pieces, as, thank God, it does in many cases, they must suffer a perfect spiritual nightmare when they think of the fate of their fellow men—their own fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, and children, included who may be amongst the reprobate—and gloom leading to despair, will follow as certainly as the night, the day. Besides, there is the fearful condition of mind on the part, those who are not quite certain about their state to be taken into consideration. These looking on the one hand to the decrees of God, and on the other to their own fears and misgivings, will in great numbers of cases come to lose all hope and sink into a condition of utter despair. In the end

they probably become sceptical, and then proceed to blaspheme as does the person pourtrayed in this poem. It must be remembered that he had been a religious man of a certain type, as he tells us :—

“ See we were nursed in the dark night-fold of your fatalist creed,
And we turned to the growing dawn, we had hoped for a dawn
indeed,

When the light of a Sun that was coming would scatter the ghosts
of the Past,

And the cramping creeds that had maddened the peoples would
vanish at last,

And we broke away from the Christ, our human brother and friend,
For He spoke, or it seem'd that He spoke, of a Hell without help,
without end.

Hoped for a dawn and it came, but the promise had faded away ;

We had past from a cheerless night to the glare of a drearier day ;

He is only a cloud and a smoke who was once a pillar of fire,

The guess of a worm in the dust and the shadow of its desire—

Of a worm as it writhes in a world of the weak, trodden down by
the strong,

Of a dying worm in a world, all massacre, murder, and wrong.”

* * * * *

“ Nay, but I am not claiming your pity : I know you of old—

Small pity for those that have ranged from the narrow warmth
of your fold ;

Where you bawled the dark side of your faith, and a God of
eternal rage,

Till you flung us back on ourselves, and the human heart and the
Age.”

* * * * *

“ What ! I should call on that Infinite Love that has served us so
well ?

Infinite wickedness rather, that made everlasting Hell,

Made us, foreknew us, foredoom'd us, and does what He will with
His own ;

Better our dead brute mother who never has heard us groan !

Hell ? If the souls of men were immortal, as men have been told,

The lecher would cleave to his lusts, and the miser would yearn for
his gold,

And so there were Hell for ever ! but were there a God as you say, His Love would have power over Hell, till it utterly vanished away. Ah yet—I have had some glimmer at times in my gloomiest woe, Of a God behind all—after, all—the great God for aught that I know ;

But the God of Love and of Hell together—they cannot be thought, If there be such a God, may the Great God curse him and bring him to naught.”

One can easily trace in the mind of this maddened victim of despair, the causes of his present condition. A false theology struck its poison fangs deep into his heart, and the reaction came, unbelief took the place of faith, trust was exchanged for hate, and hope was smothered in the turbulent raging waters of rebellion against God. There is a dramatic fragment of Proctor in which he narrates the reckless career of a prince, who for similar blasphemy against God, shared a fate according to a Spanish superstition, something like that of Lot's wife.—

“ He flung some terrible reproach at heaven,
Laughed at its God, 'tis said, and cursed the sun ;
Whereat the broad eye of the day unclosed,
And stared him into stone.”

2. *Misanthropic Notions Respecting the Human Race.* The loss of faith in our fellow men is a prolific cause of despair. We place confidence in men, and we are betrayed, we trust them and they deceive us, we open up our inmost souls for their inspection, and they prove treacherous. Not one, but many, turn out false to all their promises and pretensions. Our bosom friends, those upon whose honour and honesty we could have nearly staked our lives, not only forsake us, but become our bitterest foes, and use against us weapons formed from what their professed friendship

had elicited, and which no open enemy could have discovered. The result is, we lose faith in mankind, we suspect everyone of dishonesty, and we sink into a condition of sullen moroseness, which is but the forerunner of despair. This state of mind requires to be guarded against with the very greatest care. Better to be deceived a thousand times, than once to wrongly suspect an honourable and worthy fellow-man man. There is a well known maxim full of worldly wisdom, "Think every man a rogue until you find him to be honest." Such philosophy is of hell, and was surely invented by the devil. Acting upon this principle you will never discover the honesty, even where it exists, for society is largely a reflection of your own moods. Suspect other men, and they will in turn suspect you, and give you cause for your suspicion at the same time.

When once a man loses all faith in his fellow-men, he shuts his eyes to the glorious brightness that is always to be found by looking for it in human nature. A melancholy gloom o'ershadows him, trust departs, hope takes an everlasting farewell, and despair erects its throne in the heart. Poor Byron, whose lofty and transcendent genius shed a lustre on his age, and will remain the admiration of all the coming æons of men, with an ill-balanced mind allowed his passions to run riot, and in the end became misanthropic, and disgusted with life. What fearful turbulence of spirit must he have endured when he could write :—

"I loved—but those I love are gone ;
Had friends—my early friends are fled :
How cheerless feels the heart alone
When all its former hopes are dead !

Though gay companions o'er the bowl
 Dispel awhile the sense of ill ;
 Though pleasure stirs the maddening soul,
 The heart—the heart—is lonely still."

A true picture of a sad, sad, soul. Thus he longs for death, which he seems just now—not always—to think synonymous with annihilation.

" Ah, but to die, and go, alas !
 Where all have gone, and all must go !
 To be the nothing that I was
 Ere born to life and living woe.
 Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
 Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
 And know, whatever thou hast been
 'Tis something better not to be."

The key to this terrible state of mind we get in another poem :—

" But for myself so dark my fate,
 Through every turn of life has been
 Man and the world so much I hate,
 I care not when I quit the scene."

3. *Denial of God's Existence.* Atheism is a gloomy creed, as must be apparent to every one who reflects upon what it involves. If it were a truth it would be one to mention with bated breath, and wept over with tears of keenest sorrow. To take away God is to deprive the world of hope, to rob it of its highest consolation, and consequently to plunge the human race into the blackest despair. What possible guarantee can we have for the ultimate triumph of good, for the conquest of vice by virtue, for the Reign of Right to take the place of that of Might, if there be no God of Right and of Everlasting Goodness? Assuredly none. Things may go on getting worse and worse,

until the universe dissolves in one putrid mass of festering corruption, and men end their career of sin, sorrow, and suffering, in the blackness of non-existence. And this is the view that Tennyson sets forth in the poem on "Despair." A well known Atheist, writing on this subject, recently has told us that freethinkers are under a lasting obligation to Tennyson for giving this poem to the world. Really, people have strange tastes and stranger judgments. The one thing which is here painted, is such an awful sombre hue of blackness, is assuredly Atheism. The hero loses his hope and faith together, and becoming disgusted with the ills of life seeks relief, as did the Atheists of an earlier time, in suicide, because he sees no remedy possible. Atheism is here seen in one of its fruits, that of utter despair:—

"O we poor orphans of nothing—alone on that lonely shore,
Born of the brainless Nature who knew not that which she bore!
Trusting no longer that earthly flower would be heavenly fruit—
Come from the brute poor souls—no souls—and to die with the
brute"—

Or take the following terrible picture of the drowning of the poor despairing Atheist, and the wife he loved.

"Ah, God, and we turned to each other, we kissed, we embraced,
she and I,

Knowing the Love we were used to believe everlasting would die;
We had read their know-nothing books, and we leaned to the
darker side—

Ah, God, should we find Him, perhaps, perhaps, if we died:
We never had found Him on earth, this earth is a fatherless Hell—
Dear Love, for ever and ever, for ever and ever, farewell,
Never a cry so desolate, not since the world began!
Never a kiss so sad, no, not since the coming of man."

And for this description of Atheism, Athiests see

cause for thankfulness. Well, then, they are thankful for very small mercies. Again he goes on—

“Have I crazed myself over their horrible infidel writings? Oh, yes,
For these are the new dark ages you see, of the popular press,
When the bat comes out of his cave, and the owls are whooping at
noon,

And Doubt is the lord of this dunghill, and crows to the sun
and the moon,

Till the sun and the moon of our science are both of them turned
into blood,

And hope will have broken her heart, running after a shadow of
good ;

For their knowing and know-nothing books are scattered from hand
to hand—

We have knelt in your know-all chapel, too, looking over the sand.”

The “new dark days” are far blacker than the old ones, for where Doubt is lord, despondency and gloom bear rule, and despair—wild, utter helpless despair—becomes the portion of mankind. Tennyson is no believer in Doubt, except as a passage to a higher and grander faith. Even that couplet of his which free-thinkers so delight to quote—

“There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds,”

is always sadly misapplied by them. They should read on as follows :—

“He fought his doubts and gather’d strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them : thus he came at length

“To find a *stronger faith* his own ;
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light
And dwells not in the night alone.”

In the poem on "Despair," Tennyson's Atheist is a poor unfortunate crazed Pessimist, who sees no beauty in the universe, no good in human life, and nothing to render existence worth having. And he is a true type of the sceptic.

The teachings of Christianity are far different. Christ invites the weary and heavy laden to come to Him and find rest; and millions can testify that He has done so for them, that amidst the winds of adversity and the waters of affliction, they have experienced a settled peace, a holy calm, an unruffled soul, through trust in the Divine Father.

"Yes, thou bereaved and smitten, He will keep thee;
Through all thy dangers and distress will shield thee;
Have thou but faith, to Him yield up thy will,
His loving-kindness shall support thee still."

II. THE FOLLY OF DESPAIR.—It should require but few arguments to show that a state of mind springing from such sources as those described, and fraught with such pernicious results is foolish in the extreme. That which covers life with blackness, and shuts out all the light of the sun should assuredly be avoided if possible. The soul in despair is like the body in a dense fog, always supposing that there is no hope that the fog will ever clear away so as to allow the sun again to appear. The folly of despair will be seen in several respects.

1. *It shuts out of view possible changes for the better.* When Job's wife advised her husband to curse God and die, she never dreamed that all his trials would speedily pass away, and that a bright future was in store for him. And thus it is with us all in our distresses. The clouds encompass us, the darkness hems us in, we see no light, and we lose hope, never dreaming that behind

the mists a sun is shining, which will sooner or later dispel the gloom, and illumine the world with its beams. The adage is very old and very trite, that the darkest hour is just before the dawn. Yet so it is. When relief seems next to impossible, in the good Providence of God it comes. When there appears no grounds for hope there is often more reason than ever to hope on, and keep our courage up.

“Hope on! the worst of storms will pass away,
Hold fast thy helm, howe’er the billows flow,
Time’s at his wheel; can turn all in one day
And grave *hic jacet* o’er thy dreadest foe.

In an early book of Charles Reade’s we find the case of Job reversed, for here it is the man who curses, and the woman, like an angel of mercy, remonstrates with him and tries to console him. The family is starving, and the wife says, “We must pray to heaven to look down upon us and our children.” “You forget,” says the despairing man, “that our street is very narrow, and the opposite houses very high.” “James!” exclaims the wife, shocked at such language. He replies, “How can heaven be expected to see what honest folk endure in so dark a hole as this.” “James!” again burst out the wife, full of fear and sorrow, “What words are these?” Up gets the man from his work, and flinging his pen upon the floor, cries out, “Have we given honesty a fair trial? Yes or no?” Without a moment’s hesitation the woman exclaims, “No, not till we die as we have lived, heaven is higher than the sky, children; the sky is above the earth, and heaven is higher than the sky; and heaven is just.” A brave soul was there, as we often find it in a woman’s form. The husband cowed by his wife’s words, says, “I suppose it is so,

everybody says so. I think so at bottom myself, but I can't see it. I want to see it, but I can't," he cries fiercely, "Have my children offended heaven? They will starve, they will die! If I was heaven I'd be just, and send an angel to take these children's parts. They cried to me for bread; I had no bread, so I gave them hard words. The moment I had done that I knew it was all over. God knows it took a long while to break my heart; but it is broken at last, quite, quite, broken, broken, broken." And the poor despairing man lays his head upon the table, and sobs beyond the power of restraint. But already an angel of mercy has its foot on the stairs, and help is at hand. So would it have come to the hero of Tennyson's poem had he but waited with patience a little longer. And so it comes to us all.

2. *It injures the soul.* Like all evil passions, it grows with what it feeds on. Day by day it strengthens its hold, tightens its grasp until it has us completely in its power. It covers us with its black wings and tears our hearts with its talons. If we give way to gloom and melancholy, we shall speedily become the victim of despair, and then farewell to light, and hope, and love, and trust, and all that makes earth endurable.

3. *It is a rebellion against God.* This world is not a charnel house, presided over by a fiend, but a region of beauty, where gentleness and love abound, and over which God's Providence is ever watching. Dark clouds may for a time shut out the light of the sun and the stars, but clouds are evanescent, and will pass away. Evil is not the universe. Goodness is eternal. God lives and His mercy faileth not. Despair is rank blasphemy against heaven. The character sketched by the poet is no doubt a perfectly natural one, but it is one of

Nature's abnormal products, a monstrosity, in fact, in human form. The poor miserable despairing man shrieking out his griefs, and hurling vain and idiotic maledictions against God, displays neither courage nor nobleness of character. Prometheus is a hero; Ajax is defiant and bold; there is something awfully grand about the character of Milton's Satan; but this wretched being is simply a raving maniac, whose insane yells and screeches against Providence are such as we should look for in a lunatic asylum. The Atheists are quite welcome to him, we desire him not. There is a thousand times more nobleness of character and true courage in many a poor Christian mother, who has to toil from morning till night in the closely pent up air of a garret to feed her helpless and, it may be, sick babes, but who rejoices in her work because she feels it be her task, and at the same time her duty. She despairs not, but ever exclaims—

“I would rather walk in the dark with God than go alone in the light.

I would rather walk with Him by faith than walk alone by sight.”

III. THE REMEDY FOR DESPAIR. Is there a remedy? Most assuredly, and a very potent one it is—one that never fails to effect a cure, if rightly applied, however deep rooted the disease, and of however long-standing the malady. The remedy is the religion of Jesus, with the great and eternal truth which it enunciates—God is Love. Recognising the fact that there is a God, and that His mercy is over all that His hands have made, how can we ever despair? We know that we are in His hands, and that therefore we are safe. He knows our wants and our weaknesses, and does not overlook our most trifling sorrows. Afflictions may

come and troubles abound, yet these are meant in mercy, for God is Love. Sickness may lay us low, death may remove from us our dear ones, still His grace is sufficient for us, and God is Love. Cares may threaten to overwhelm us, and ruin stare us in the face, still God is Love. Friends may prove treacherous, and loved companions fickle and false, still all is for the best, for God is Love. Let us, therefore, leave the demon of despair to Atheists, and those who have neither faith in God nor confidence in man, but for ourselves we must cling to the eternal truth that God is Love.

I cannot always trace the way
Where Thou, Almighty One, dost move,
But I can always, always say,
That God is love.

When fear her chilling mantle throws
O'er earth, my soul to heaven above,
As to her native home, upsprings—
For God is love.

When mystery clouds my darkened path,
I'll check my dread, my doubts reprove ;
In this my soul sweet comfort hath,
That God is love.

Yes, God is love ; a thought like this
Can every gloomy thought remove,
And turn all tears, all woes to bliss,
For God is love.

GEORGE SEXTON, M.A., LL.D.

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HOMILETIC SKETCHES ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

OUR PURPOSE.—Many learned and devout men have gone *Philologically* through this **TEHELIM**, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough **HOMILETIC** treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

OUR METHOD.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) **THE HISTORY** of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) **ANNOTATIONS** of the passages. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase or allusion that may occur.—(3) **THE ARGUMENT** of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is amongst the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) **THE HOMILETICS** of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately deduced, as to suggest such thoughts and indicate such sermonizing methods as may promote the proficiency of modern **pulpit ministrations**.

No. CLVI.

The Tears of Memory, and the Cry for Vengeance.

“BY THE RIVERS OF BABYLON,” &c.—*Ps. cxxxvii.* 1-8.

HISTORY:—The author of this touching elegy is unknown. Some say it was written during the captivity, and some after. It is clear that the memory of the trials of the exile was very fresh in the mind of the writer. Babylon was taken by Cyrus B.C. 538, two years afterwards the Jews were allowed to return to their own land, and about twenty years after

that Babylon was destroyed by Darius Hyspates, and the temple rebuilt.

ANNOTATIONS:—Ver. 1. “*By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion.*” This may mean either the streams within the city, which, according to Herodotus, covered 200 square miles, or the streams that flow in different parts of the empire,

such as the Euphrates, the Cheva, and the Uri. "Yea, we wept." As they contrasted the scenes of home with their present position, their tears flowed.

Ver. 2.—"*We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof,*" &c. Willows, it seems, abounded on the banks of all the streams. Souls in sorrow hail solitude, and recoil from notes of joyous music.

Ver. 3.—"*For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song,*" &c. Was this request made in scorn to tantalise the exile, or that by music the exile might get reconciled to his captive condition? This is uncertain, but it is certain that singing was out of the question.

Ver. 4.—"*How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?*" It cannot be done. Mirth from a heart black with sad memories cannot proceed.

Ver. 5.—"*If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.*" The words "*her cunning*" are no in the original. The words mean, perhaps, "let my right hand forget her skill or her power of motion." "*Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth* (See Job xxix. 10), *if I prefer not*

Jerusalem above my chief joy." Jerusalem is higher[†] than all to us.

Ver. 7.—"*Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem,*" &c. "From the thought of Israel's sorrows the Psalmist turns to those who had caused them, and calls down God's vengeance, first on the kindred race of Edom, who had malignantly helped the oppressor, and then on the oppressor himself. *Lit.* Remember to the sons of Edom the day of Jerusalem, the day of its destruction, in which they rejoiced. Edom's malicious joy in the overthrow of Jerusalem is referred to in Obad. i. 15; Jer. xlix. 7-22; Lam. iv. 21; Ezek. xxv. 8-14."

Ver. 8, 9.—"*O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee,*" &c. The expression, "*Who art to be destroyed*" refers, perhaps, to the ruin that Cyrus began, and that Darius completed. "*Happy shall he be.*" Or, rather, happy he. "The desire for retribution on the incorrigible tyrant and oppressor is natural to the oppressed. The exaction of such retribution belongs as a right and a duty to the law-

fully constituted authority.
"Dasheth thy little ones."
 The inhumanity of ancient warfare is well known, and well illustrated by this ex-

ample. The poet draws his phrases from the habits of warfare in his times.'—*Murphy.*

HOMILETICS:—In this Psalm we have two things worthy of attention.

I. THE TEARS OF MEMORY.

*"By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down;
 Yea, We wept when we remembered Zion."*

Observe two facts concerning their sorrow. First: Their sorrow had *reference to the loss of the highest blessing*. What had they lost? Not merely their country, with its pastoral meads, waving corn-fields, luxuriant vineyards, majestic trees, and towering mountains, in a "land flowing with milk and honey," but their ZION, where their nation met their God to worship Him, &c. No loss equal to the loss of religion. Secondly: Their sorrow was *deliberate and all-absorbing*. It was not a mere sudden gush of melancholy passion; it was produced by thought, "*we wept when we remembered Zion.*" Their sorrow, too, was all-absorbing. They could do nothing else; they "*sat down,*" they "*hanged up their harps.*" They would do nothing else. "*If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.*" Now these tears of memory (1) Reveal one of the most wonderful faculties of our nature, the faculty of memory; (2) Reveal a view of retribution opposed to modern scepticism. Modern sceptics say we pay our moral debts as we go on, that retribution for sin is prompt and adequate here. Not so, memory brings up the sufferings of the past. (3) Reveal a view of our mortal life terribly solemn. We do not, as the

brute does, finish with life as we go on ; we are bound by memory to re-visit the past, and to re-live our yesterdays. (4) Reveal a futurity which must reverse our present calculations. How different do things appear to the eye of memory to what they do to the eye of sense. What we now regard as most desirable memory will regard as the most damnable. * In this Psalm we have—

II. A CRY FOR VENGEANCE.

“Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom.

In the day of Jerusalem,

Who said, Rase it,

Rase it even to the foundations thereof.”

Here is revenge, the innate sentiment of justice, running into an inordinate passion ; for there is in us all an ineradicable instinct desiring the reward of virtue and the punishment of wrong. But when this instinct is so heated into rampant rage as to make us forgetful of our infirmities and deserts, it is revenge, which Lord Bacon calls “wild justice.” (1) The innate sentiment of justice is a serene sentiment ; it is sublimely calm in the bosom of God. But when it breaks into wild passion it is vengeance, and becomes a lawless thing. (2) The innate sentiment of justice seeks to rectify injuries, but when it breaks into the passion of revenge it seeks the destruction of the offender. (3) The innate sentiment of justice is an element of happiness in the soul, but when it breaks into the passion of revenge it is uneasy.

“Revenge is sweet,” says Dryden. Not so.

“Heat not a furnace for your foe so hot

That you do singe yourself.”—*Shakspeare.*

The words of Jeremy Taylor are worth quoting. “A

* For amplification of these points, see “Homilist,” Vol. I., p. 180.

pure and simple revenge does in no way restore man towards the felicity which the injury did interrupt. For revenge is but doing a simple evil, and does not, in its formality, imply reparation, for the mere repeating of our own right is permitted to them that will do it by charitable instruments. All the ends of human felicity are secured without revenge, for, without it, we are permitted to restore ourselves, and therefore it is against natural reason to do an evil that no way co-operates the proper and perspective end of human nature. And he is a miserable person whose good is the evil of his neighbour; and he that revenges, in many cases, does worse than he that did the injury: in all cases as bad."

No. CLVII.

Moral Features of a Good Man's Life.

"I WILL PRAISE THEE WITH MY WHOLE HEART," &c.—

Ps. cxxxviii. 1-8.

HISTORY:—Although this Psalm is by some ascribed to David, there is no conclusive evidence whatever that he is its author. In truth it seems impossible to settle the authorship not only of many of the Psalms but not a few of those which are ascribed to David. Not knowing the authorship, the time and circumstances of its composition are also wrapt in uncertainty.

ANNOTATIONS:—Ver. 1. "*I will praise Thee with my whole heart, before the gods will I sing praise unto Thee.*" By the "gods" here some understand the angels, others the false deities of the heathen world. The idea of the author is, however, that he was courageous enough to worship God before any order of men, however high in themselves or popular in the estimation of men.

Ver. 2. "*I will worship toward Thy holy temple, and praise Thy name for Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth.*" As the temple was not built in David's day we do not see how he could be the author. "*Thou hast magnified Thy Word.*" Thy promise. "*Above all Thy name.*" "*Thou hast performed Thy promise above that which Thy name and fame as a faithful performer of promises led us to expect and hope. A special promise and its abundant fulfilment seem referred to.*"—Canon Cooke.

Ver. 3. "*In the day when I cried Thou answeredst me, and strengthened me with strength in my soul.*" The rendering of Delitzsch explains the meaning. "*In the day that I called Thou didst answer me, Thou didst inspire me with courage, a lofty feeling pervaded my soul.*"

Ver. 4, 5. "*All the kings of the earth shall praise Thee, O Lord, when they hear the words of Thy mouth,*" &c. This is a very sanguine hope. In all ages kings have heard the utterances of Jehovah's voice, and alas, but few of them have given thanks, nor have they sung in the "*ways of the Lord.*"

Ver. 6. "*Though the Lord be high, yet hath He respect unto the lowly: but the proud He knoweth afar off.*" "Glorious truth this! Sublimely great as He is, He respects the "*lowly*" and takes notice of the proud.

Ver. 7. "*Though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive me,*" &c. Here is an experience that most men have, they "*walk in the midst of trouble.*" But here is a confidence that few men possess.

Ver. 8. "*The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me, Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever.*" The words "*that which*" and "*endureth*" are not in the original. The idea is that He will carry out the work which He has begun. "*Forsake not the works of Thine own hands.*" He will never neglect what He has created. "*Thou openest Thy liberal hand,*" &c.

ARGUMENT:—The author of this Psalm praises the Almighty for the truth of His word, verses 1 to 3, prophecies that all kings should do the same, verses 4 to 6, and expresses his confidence that He will take care of him, verses 7 and 8.

HOMILETICS :—We have here the grand resolve, the noble testimony, the sanguine hope, the theological belief, and the sublime confidence of a good man. We have here—

I. The GRAND RESOLVE of a good man. His resolve was to serve God. First: Entirely. “*I will praise Thee with my whole heart.*” Unless the Almighty is served with this wholeness of soul He is never served at all. Secondly: Courageously. “*Before the gods will I sing praise unto Thee.*” No shame, no timidity, but exulting courage. Thirdly: Intelligently. Here is the reason. (1) “*Thy lovingkindness.*” (2) “*Thy truth.*” *Thou hast magnified Thy word*” (promise). Here are the highest reasons for serving the Highest Being. He is infinitely good and true. We have here—

II. The NOBLE TESTIMONY of a good man. “*In the day when I cried Thou answeredst me, and strengthened me with strength in my soul.*” What good man who has ever prayed could not furnish similar testimony? The answer comes, not perhaps in the way it was expected, but comes in the form of “*strength.*” True prayer is in itself a strengthening exercise. It brings God Himself as the great reality into the soul and makes it mighty for great deeds. We have here—

III. The SANGUINE HOPE of a good man. “*All the kings of the earth shall praise Thee, O Lord, when they hear the words of Thy mouth, yea they shall sing in the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord.*” (1) This hope implies a very *desirable* object. To have all the kings of the earth praising God, what patriotic, philanthropic, and religious ends could be more desirable? (2) This hope implies a *reasonable expecta-*

tion. Would it not be natural to expect that when kings heard of God, the words of His mouth, they would worship and serve Him? We have here—

IV. The THEOLOGICAL BELIEF of a good man. “*Though the Lord be high, yet hath He respect unto the lowly, but the proud He knoweth afar off.*” He believed: (1) That no creature is too *humble* for the Divine regard. He is not so taken up with the vast as to ignore the minute, so sublimely exalted as not to condescend to the meanest. He believed, (2) That no creature is too *vile* to escape His notice. “*The proud He knoweth afar off.*” Pride is an abomination to the Lord. He knows every proud man, and every proud feeling and act. We have here—

V. The SUBLIME CONFIDENCE of a good man. “*Though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive me.*” These words present to us. First: The *universal law* of human life. What is that? Progress, walking. Implying: (1) A constant change of position. (2) A constant approximation to destiny, every step leading nearer to the end. Life is a *constant* walk. No pause. A *rapid* walk. “*Swifter than a post.*” An *irretraceable* walk. Secondly: The *saddening probabilities* of human life. “*In the midst of trouble.*” The path is not through flowery meads and under azure skies, but rugged, tempestuous, perilous. “*In the midst of trouble.*” Thirdly: The *grand support* of human life. “*Thou wilt revive me.*” The support is all-sufficient the only effective and ever available. God give us all this confidence in walking in the “*midst of trouble.*”

No. CLVIII.

The All-Seeing and All-Present One.

"O LORD THOU HAST SEARCHED ME AND KNOWN ME." &c.—

Ps. cxxxix. 1-12.

HISTORY.—This Psalm is attributed to David, and the reasons for denying or doubting his authorship are as yet too few and weak to deprive him of the honour. Because of certain Chaldean words and phrases which mark it, it is supposed to have been written after the captivity. It is a magnificent poem, the crown of all the Psalms.

ANNOTATIONS.—Ver. 1-6. "*O Lord Thou hast searched me and known me.*" In this and the five following verses the Omniscience of God is represented. "*Searched*" made full examination. "*My thought,*" which is not known to my fellow man. "*Thou compasses*" or sittest, ascertainest thoroughly "*my lying down*" to rest. Every word as well as the thought is known. "*Laid Thy hand.*" This means experimental knowledge is open to God. "*Too wonderful,*" unattainable and inexplicable.

Ver. 7.—"*Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither*

shall I flee from Thy presence?" In this and the four following verses the Omnipresence of God is represented.

"*Whither?*" Is there a spot in the universe where I can elude Thy presence? (Jer. xxiii. 23, 24.)

Ver. 8.—"*If I ascend up into heaven Thou art there.*" Could I soar to the loftiest heights of the universe, I should find Thee there. "*If I make my bed in hell,*" literally Sheol or Hades, "*Thou art there.*" There, too, I should meet Thee, down in the deepest abysses as well as in the highest heights.

Ver. 9.—"*If I take the wings of the morning.*" "If I should lift up wings (Ezek. x. 16) of dawn, such wings as the dawn of morning has; that is, could I fly with the swiftness with which the first rays of morning's light shot across the sky. Compare the wings of the sun (Mal. iv. 2) and of the wind (Ps. xviii. 10). "*And dwell in the uttermost parts of the*

sea," i.e., the Mediterranean, denoting the extreme west. This seems to suggest that the Psalm was written in Palestine."—*Dr. Young*.

Ver 10.—"*Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.*" This is his personal conviction. Everywhere he would find the "*hand*" of God upon him, leading and holding him.

Ver. 11, 12.—"*If I say surely the darkness shall cover me: even the night shall be light about me,*" &c. Should I say let darkness enshroud me, and let all the light about me be quenched in midnight, still I should not elude Thine eye or escape Thy presence. "Gloom is as light and light as gloom."—*Keble*.

HOMILETICS:—God is represented here—

I. As the ALL-SEEING ONE. He is cognisant of everything not only pertaining to the universe, but pertaining to man, knowing his "*down-sitting*" and "*uprising*" all his bodily movements, understanding "*his thoughts afar off*," far off in periods before their conception, far off in the regions of immensity, far off in their future existence, ramifications and influences. He is "*acquainted with all his ways*," his tendencies, and habits. "*Not a word in my tongue*," not a word, however insignificant in meaning or weak in sound, but what He observes. Between God's observation of objects and the observation of all intelligent creatures, however keen their vision and vast their knowledge, there is a threefold difference. First: He sees the *whole* of an object. At best we can only see the outside of a thing, the curve, the angle, the colour. We cannot penetrate the essence of anything, not even of an atom. Secondly: He sees the whole of *every* object. How few are the objects we see even thus externally and partially! Some are too small and some too distant. But He sees all, His eye takes in the

immeasurable universe. Thirdly: He sees the whole of everything at the *same time*. We can only view one thing at a time, and while we are giving attention even to a small portion of that one thing, all other things are ignored. But He sees the whole of everything at once.

“Soul of the world All-seeing eye,
Where, where shall man Thy presence fly?
Say, would he climb the starry height?
All heaven is instinct with Thy Light.
Dwell in the darkness of the grave?
Yea Thou art there to judge and save,
In vain on wings of morn we soar,
In vain the realms of space explore,
In vain retreat to shades of night
For what can veil us from Thy sight?
Distance dissolves before Thy ray,
And darkness kindles into day.”

William Peter.

God is represented here—

II. AS the ALL-PRESENT ONE. “*Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven Thou art there. If I make my bed in hell behold Thou art there.*” In the highest heights, in the deepest depths, in the remotest districts, in the blackest darkness, everywhere Thou art. First: He is present *everywhere in the entirety of Himself*. There is a sense in which men can be present in places distant from the particular scene of their existence, present representatively and influentially. The Sovereign of England is present in all civilized courts by plenipotentiaries. But no creature being can be personally present in two places at the same time, but God is. He is as truly and entirely in one place as in another, and in all places alike. He is here, not merely His agency and influences, but He

Himself, He is everywhere. Well might the Psalmist say, "*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high, I cannot attain unto it.*" God is mystery. If He were not mysterious He would not be God. The whole universe floats on the ocean, and is canopied by the sky of mystery. Secondly: He is present *in all things, yet distinct from all things*. He is not the universe, nor is the universe Him, as the pantheist would represent. No. He is distinct, though *in all, and through all*, as distinct from all, as the architect from the building, the swimmer from the flood, the author from the book.

Practically, this subject serves three important purposes. First: To refute *some popular errors of human life*. (1) There is the error that attaches *importance to consecrated places and seasons*. A greater and perhaps a more pernicious absurdity does not exist than the idea that God is to be worshipped in one place and at one time, rather than in all places and at all times. Every spot is an altar, every day a Sabbath, for God is everywhere. (2) There is the error that supposes *that formal worship can be of any real worth*. What thousands have the impression that if they attend regularly places of worship, and conform to the ceremonies practised by the congregations that they have done their duty; that if they utter the responses, join in the psalmody, bow the head and bend the knee at the name of Jesus, that they have done meritorious service! But all this is not worship. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth." (3) There is the error that imagines that *death will make some fundamental alteration in their relation to God*. The impression is general,

though not expressed, that death will introduce us into a state of things widely different from the present. But if we live at all, we shall ever live under the eye and in the presence of God, and what is wrong here will be wrong there, and what is right here will be right there. The subject serves, Secondly: To *reprove some prevalent impieties in human conduct.* (1) There is *atheism*. Denying God, and yet living in His presence and under His eye, denying the sun when its beams are penetrating the eyeball, living without God in the world while He is ever present. (2) There is *indifferentism*. There are those who are theoretical Theists, but who are utterly indifferent to the presence and claims of God, caring for none of those things which involve fundamental obligations and the chief interests in life, dead to God's eye and God's presence. The subject serves, Thirdly: To *reveal the supreme interest of human life.* If we are to be ever before God and under His searching glance, what does common sense tell us to do as our chief concern? *Cultivate a loving affection for Him.* To be bound to live for ever in the presence of a being that you care nothing about would become an intolerable existence, but to be bound to live for ever with a being that you hate, would be misery of the highest degree and intensest poignancy. Thus the man who passes from this world without love to God will have to live, live under the burning glare and in the radiant presence of One he hates, and thus go on æon after æon, no trumpet sounding the jubilee of deliverance. Our supreme duty is to love God with all our hearts, and duty here as always is supremely wise.

HOMILETIC GLANCES AT THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

[As our purpose in the treatment of this Gospel is purely the development, in the briefest and most suggestive form of Sermonic Outlines, we must refer our readers to the following works for all critical inquiries into the author and authorship of the book, and also for any minute criticisms on difficult clauses. The works we shall especially consult are:—"Introduction to New Testament," by Bleek; "Commentary on John," by Tholuck; "Commentary on John," by Hengstenberg; "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," by Westcott; "The Gospel History," by Ebrard; "Our Lord's Divinity," by Liddon; "St. John's Gospel," by Oosterzee; "Doctrine of the Person of Christ," by Dörner, Lange, Sears, Farrer, etc., etc.]

No. CLIV.

The Morally Wrong Ever Inexpedient.

"THEN DELIVERED HE HIM," &c.—John xix. 16-18.

EXPOSITION:—Ver. 16:—"Then delivered he Him, therefore, unto them to be crucified, and they took Jesus and led Him away." It was not John's intention to give all the details of Christ's crucifixion. He only states those circumstances which the other three biographers have omitted, and thus fills up the narrative. Pilate, in now delivering up Christ, had ridded himself for a time of a difficulty that had been pressing heavily on his heart for many anxious hours, but in doing this, what a crime he committed, and what immeasurable issues came therefrom. The Jews now had what in their intolerant malignity they had been hungering for, for many

a long month, and what they had clamoured for with a vehemency of soul. They led Him as a "lamb to the slaughter." He seems to have made no resistance whatever.

Ver. 17:—"And He, bearing His cross, went forth into a place, called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha." It was called the place of a skull, not because of the executions which took place there, but because of the rounded form and bare aspect of the hill. John does not say anything here of that which the other evangelists inform us, that a great crowd of women followed, and the tears of compassion which they wept at the tragic scene, nor does he

say anything about Simon of Cyrene, in Lybia, who was compelled to bear the cross part of the way. "The cross had the form of a T. It was of no great height. The condemned man was raised to the desired elevation by means of cords (*in crucem tollere*), the hands were nailed to the transverse pieces of wood, either before or after he was raised. Keim quotes the following words from a Latin author: "*Patibulo suffixus in crucem crudeliter erigitur*," which show that the hands were usually nailed *before* its erection to the top of the cross. That they might not be torn by the weight of the body, the latter rested on a block of wood, fastened to the shaft of the cross, and on which the prisoner sat as on

horseback. There has been great discussion in modern times as to whether the feet were also nailed. The passages of the ancients quoted by Meyer (see in Matt. xxvii. 35) and Keim are decisive; they prove that, as a rule, the feet were nailed. Luke xxiv. 39 leads to the conclusion that it was so with Jesus. Sufferers lived actually on the cross for twelve hours, sometimes till the third day,"—*Godet*.

Ver. 18 : — "*Where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.*"

Why was this? Did the Jews demand that He should die in the midst of two malefactors, in order to enhance the ignominy, or did Pilate do it in order to humiliate them? Who knows?

HOMILETICS :—Here we have

I. A DIFFICULTY REMOVED, DESTINED TO APPEAR IN MORE TERRIBLE FORMS. "*Then delivered he Jesus up to them to be crucified.*" In this, Pilate, I have no doubt, felt that he had got rid of a difficulty that had weighed heavily upon him ever since Christ was brought under his notice. How to meet the claims of his Imperial Master, maintain his popularity with the Jewish people, and at the same time satisfy his own conscience, constituted a difficulty that had distracted him beyond measure. Now, handing Him over to the Jews, he would probably feel

somewhat relieved, breathe freer, and have nothing more to do with this Jesus of Nazareth. Alas ! Pilate, the difficulty is only temporarily shifted, and pushed for a moment out of sight, but not removed, or even lessened in bulk or hideousness, but otherwise becoming more huge and revolting. It only passed out of the region of immediate actuality, into the awful realm of moral memory, where it will appear and reappear in aspects of ever-increasing horror as ages roll on. Thus it is ever, no difficulty can be removed by outraging, or even ignoring the immutable principles of rectitude. Most men have certain difficulties pressing upon them, a desire to remove them is natural, but every effort will prove fruitless, unless accordant with that everlasting law of right, which binds the universe together, and on which the throne of the Almighty is settled.

One man has a *financial* difficulty ; accumulated debts weigh him down, he knows not how to deliver himself from his embarrassments. He makes himself bankrupt, or forges a bill, and foolishly fancies that he has ridded himself of his difficulty. Not so. Another man has a *social* difficulty. By amorous impulses and reckless vows, he has committed himself to someone whom he comes to loathe as an intolerable infliction. In an evil moment, he does what is being done almost every day—uses the razor, or administers poison, foolishly supposes that the difficulty is got rid of. But the old tormentor, though buried under the earth, is alive in memory to haunt him for ever. Another man has a *moral* difficulty, he is oppressed with the sense of his guilt, his conscience is a torment, he seeks to remove this difficulty by resorting to the inebriating

cup, and revelling in scenes of gaiety and debauch. His moral nature gets benumbed, remorseful sensations are gone. But is his difficulty removed? No. That sleeping conscience shall break in thunder, and flash in flame. Believe me, there is no getting rid of any difficulty, by any effort, however skilful and earnest, in deviating one iota from the right. No means in such cases can sanctify the end, but frustrate the end and overwhelm with confusion the doer. Pilate, He whom thou hast delivered up to the Jews must come back to thee!

II. Here we have a CONQUEST ACHIEVED WHICH MUST OVERWHELM THE VICTIMS IN ULTIMATE RUIN. "*And they took Jesus and led Him away.*" The Jews were now triumphant, they had gained what they had been seeking for months, and even years. How earnestly they had wrought to "get a case against Him!" With lynx eyes they had watched Him, they had employed spies and suborned witnesses. At last they had gained the day. He was in their ruthless hands, and law was on their side. The cross on which He was to be executed was on His shoulders, and Golgotha was in sight. With what fiendish exultation they wended their steps onward to the scene of torture and death. But of what worth to them was this conquest? How transient their exultations! Their very conquest would rebound on their own heads and overwhelm them with ruin. Even in this life they felt the *temporal* rebound. A very few years on, not more than forty, and the Roman battalions led on by Titus and Vespasian would ravage their country, flood their city with human blood, set their temple in flames, break up their commonwealth, and

scatter their survivors as vagrants over the face of the earth. Truly the "triumphing of the wicked is short." History abounds with instances of conquests reversed, and conquerers conquered. "He that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword." In modern times the anti-slavery reformer in South America is a remarkable illustration. The slave holders martyred that noble man, John Brown, thereby foolishly imagining that they had dealt an effective blow against all slave-liberating forces in the United States. But in the course of one brief year or two that hellish deed rebounded on their own heads. The whole slave-holding system was shivered to atoms, and every bondman was made free. The principle is this, that whatever is wrongfully achieved must lead to ruin. A man struggles for a fortune, he achieves it, but how? Struggles for senatorial, or perhaps regal power. He gains it, but how? The *how* is the question. All the produce of human labour, however valuable and magnificent, if unrighteously directed, the justice of the universe turns into stone that will grind the possessors into powder.

III. Here we have AGONIES ENDURED, TENDING TO IMMEASURABLE GOOD. "*And He bearing His cross went forth into a place, called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him.*" Who shall depict the agonies of the crucifixion! All nature seemed to groan in sympathy with the mysterious Sufferer, the heavens darkened at high noon, the solid rocks rent asunder, the buried dead started to life. But the good issuing from all this anguish will brighten the universe with joy, and fill the ages with rapture. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

All the streams of happiness that flow through human souls, quickening them into life, and clothing them with beauty, issue from the deep, dark fountain of the Redeemer's anguish. "These are they that have come out of great tribulation, but have had their robes washed," &c., &c.

In truth, no man can really be happy without enduring personal sufferings of some kind or other, but they must be endured in the spirit of the cross. Trials tune our hearts to music, tribulation fits us for the skies. "Our light afflictions which are but for a moment," &c.

" Oh, let me suffer, till I know
 The good that cometh from the pain,
 Like seeds beneath the wintry snow,
 That wake in flowers and golden grain.
 Oh, let me suffer, till I find
 What plants of sorrow can impart,
 Some gift, some triumph of the mind,
 Some flower, some fruitage of the heart.
 The hour of anguish passes by ;
 But, in the spirit there remains
 The outgrowth of its agony,
 The compensation of its pains.
 In meekness, which suspects no wrong,
 In patience, which endures control,
 In faith, which makes the spirit strong,
 In peace and purity of soul."

Thomas C. Upham.

IV. Here we have a SIMILARITY OF CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT CHARACTERS UNSPEAKABLY DIVERSE. "*They crucified Him and two others on either side,*" &c. Here are three men condemned as criminals by their country, side by side, each nailed to the cross, and enduring apparently, the same kind of physical torture. There is a great outward similarity; they all appear to be

dying the same kind of death. But how different are they in their souls! Each mind has a world of its own. He, who is in the midst, in being and character, stands at an infinite distance from the other two. He is the God-Man. Invisible worlds pause and wonder at His sufferings, the material universe vibrates with His groans. Of those on His side, one of them is a stricken penitent, struggling his way up to a virtuous and a happy life in the future, and will soon be in the paradise of the blest; the other is a hardened wretch, ripe for destruction, and will soon fall into the nethermost hell. Characters so diverse, where circumstances are so like, should (1) *Guard us from the error of making external circumstances the test by which to determine our spiritual position.* And (2) *Show us the native power of each soul over the external circumstances in which it is placed.**

Sermonic Saplings.

A TRUE AND A FALSE ESTIMATE OF GENUINE MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

“LET A MAN SO ACCOUNT OF US AS OF THE MINISTERS OF
CHRIST,” &c.—*I. Cor. iv. 1-7.*

Here we have—

I. A TRUE estimate of genuine ministers of the Gospel. First: They are *servants of Christ*. “Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ.” There are some who regard ministers of the Gospel as

* See “Homilist,” Vol. ix., Page 132.

servants of their Church. The Churches guarantee their stipend, and they require that their dogmas shall be propounded and their laws obeyed. The paymasters, whether deacons or elders, or the State, naturally expect subordination in their ministers. He who yields in any measure to such an expectation degrades his position, and is not in the truest sense a minister of Christ. He who is the true servant of Christ will feel and act as the moral master of the people, the leader and commander. "Obey them that have the will over you," &c. There is no office on this earth so dignified and royal as that of the true servant of Christ. Secondly : As servants of Christ they are *responsible*. "Stewards of the mysteries of God." The "mysteries of God" here mean the Gospel, which in the second chapter is said to be "the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world." The Gospel is a mystery not in the sense of absolute incomprehensibility, but in the sense of progressive unfoldment, both in respect to communities and individuals. It is a mystery to the man who at first begins its study, but as he gets on it becomes more and more clear. The true minister is entrusted with these "mysteries," is to bring them out, translate them into intelligible ideas, and dispense them to the people. As a steward of such things his position is one of transcendent responsibility. Thirdly : As servants of Christ they are *faithful*. "Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." Fidelity is an essential attribute of a true minister. He must be faithful to his *trust*, not abuse it, but use it according to the directions of its owner. Faithful to its owner, in all things regulated by his directions. He must be faithful to his *hearers*, seeking no man's applause, fearing no man's

frown, "commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Fourthly : As servants of Christ they are *independent*. "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment." Whilst no true minister will despise the favour or court the contempt of men, they will not be concerned about their judgment so long as they are faithful to their God. Paul gives utterance to this sentiment in order, no doubt, to reprove those preachers in the Corinthian Church who were seeking the praise of men. Paul seems to indicate here three reasons for this feeling of independency. (1) His own consciousness of faithfulness. "For I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified." "The sense is," says a modern expositor, "I am not conscious of evil, or unfaithfulness to myself: that is, in my ministerial life." It is well remarked by Calvin that "Paul does not here refer to the whole of his life, but only to his Apostleship. And the sense is, 'I am conscious of integrity in this office. My own mind does not condemn me of ambition or unfaithfulness. Others may accuse me, but I am not conscious of that which should condemn me, or render me unworthy of this office.'" Another reason that Paul indicates for this feeling of independency is, (2) His confidence in the judgment of God. "But he that judgeth me is the Lord." I am content to abide by His judgment. If His judgment of me agrees not with my own judgment of myself, I will loyally submit. The other reason for this feeling of independency is, (3) His belief in a full revelation of that judgment. "Therefore judge nothing before the time until the Lord come: who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness," &c. Do not let us judge

one another ; do not let us even trust too much to our own judgment of ourselves. Let us await heaven's judgment. (a) There is a period appointed for that judgment. "Judge nothing before the time till the Lord come." There is a "day appointed in which He will judge the world in righteousness." Ah ! that day. (b) At that period there will be a full revelation of our characters. "Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the hearts." (c) At that period, too, every man shall have his due. "And then shall every man have praise of God." "Praise" here does not mean approbation—but that every man shall receive his just due. Such considerations as these may well make ministers independent of the judgments of men, and regardless alike of their smiles and their frowns. Here we have—

II. A FALSE estimate of genuine ministers of the Gospel. "And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos," &c. Paul here means to say that he spoke of himself and Apollos to show the impropriety of one minister being pitted against another. The members of the Corinthian Church had evidently formed an incorrect estimate of the true Gospel minister. First : They seemed to estimate ministers in *proportion as they met their views and feelings*. Every true preacher preaches the Gospel as it has passed through his own mind, and as it passes through his own mind it will of course be more interesting to the minds most in harmony with his own experience, capacity. and sympathies. Hence, in the Corinthian Church those who preferred Peter's preaching thought no one was like Peter : those who preferred Apollos thought there were none like him ;

and so with Paul. It is so now. "There is no minister like our minister; all others are grades below." This is very false, for inasmuch as the great bulk of the community are more or less uneducated, unreflecting, and sensuous, the preacher who approximates most to their type of mind will attract the largest crowd and get the loudest hosannas. But is he on that account superior to others? By no means. Thus it is that some of the most inferior preachers are over-rated, and the most elevated and devoted degraded; whereas all true ministers are "servants of Christ," the "stewards of the mysteries of God," and as such should be honoured. Secondly: They seemed to estimate ministers according to the *greatness of their natural endowments*. "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" &c. Between the natural endowments of Paul, Apollos, and Peter there was a great difference, and, indeed, between all ministers of the Gospel there is a difference in natural endowment, a great difference in the quality and measure of mind. But what of that? There is nothing in those natural endowments for boasting, for they all came from God. The man of the most far-reaching intellect, the most brilliant imagination, and transcendent genius, has nothing which he has not received from that Spirit which distributes to every man according to his own will. No man or angel deserves credit on account of natural abilities.

CONCLUSION.—"Let us strive," says *F. W. Robertson*, "as much as possible to be tranquil. Smile when men sneer; be humble when they praise; patient when they blame. Their judgment will not last; 'man's judgment,' literally 'man's day,' is only for a time, but God's is for eternity. So would you be

secure alike when the world frowns its censure or its applause upon you, feel hourly that God will judge. That will be your safeguard under both. It will be a small thing to you to be judged of any man's judgment, for your cause will be pleaded before the Judge and the Discerner of all secrets."

FIVE-FOLD SUBJECTS WORTH REFLECTION.

"WHEREFORE, I BESEECH YOU, BE YE FOLLOWERS OF ME," &c.—1 Cor. iv. 16-21.*

THERE are five noteworthy subjects in these verses.—

I. A REMARKABLE REQUEST. "Be ye followers of me." Were Paul an ordinary man, such an exhortation would resound with arrogance, but he was a man of pre-eminent excellence, Christly in spirit, deportment, and ministry. There were three reasons why they should imitate him. First: He was a *follower of Christ*. There was no living man who had followed his Master so closely. Elsewhere he says: "Be ye followers of me as I also am of Christ." Secondly: He was their *spiritual father*. He had begotten them in the Gospel. They were his moral offspring. They had numerous instructors, but he was their father, they gave them ideas, he gave them character. Thirdly: He was *no partisan*. Other teachers amongst them became the leaders of parties, these parties were contending one with another, but Paul belonged to no party, he followed Christ, knew "nothing amongst men but Christ,

* For sketch on verse 15, see "Homilist," Vol. xxxix., p. 280.

and Him crucified." Such a man was justified in calling on others to follow Him. "Ministers," says an old writer, "should so live that their people may take pattern from them, and even after their copy, they should guide them by their lives as well as by their lips, go before them on the way to heaven, and not content themselves with pointing."

II. A HIGH TESTIMONY. "For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church." He is dear to me as a "son," he is "faithful in the Lord," he knows my "ways." High testimony this. And this is the man he promises to send to them, what for? That he might give them good reasons why they should be followers of him. I do not want you to follow me in the dark, I send him that he may throw light upon my ways everywhere, "in every church." A man must have a high consciousness of rectitude who can trust the representation of his character to one who knows him as well as a son knows his father, and withal a man of incorruptible honesty. Here is—

III. A FOOLISH EXULTATION. "Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you." There were those in the Church at Corinth who were out of sympathy with Paul, and who had no desire that he should visit them, and as the "wish is father to the thought," when they heard he was coming they would not believe it. When the intelligence that he was sending Timothy to them reached them they would be likely to say, "This proves the truth of our assertion, he is afraid to come himself and so he sends Timothy!" In this they

seem to have rejoiced, they were "puffed up." Now I call this a *foolish* exultation, because the visit of Paul to them was what they deeply needed, and was intended to confer on them the highest blessing. How often do we foolishly rejoice in deliverance from visitations, fraught with priceless blessings.

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head."—*Cowper*.

Here is—

IV. AN EXEMPLARY DECISION. "But I will come to you shortly if the Lord will," &c. Paul believed that God had a will concerning him, and that will determined his destiny. Hence on this he based all his calculations in life, all his plans and purposes were subject to that will. "If the Lord will." This is an exemplary decision. His will is not only absolute and righteous, but benevolent, therefore to acquiesce in that will is not only right but wise. "Go to, now ye that say to-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; whereas ye know not what will be on the morrow." Here is—

V. A GLORIOUS SYSTEM. "For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power." By this he means, I presume, the Gospel ministry. It is *divinely regal* "*Kingdom*," it is not a thing of sentiments or ceremony, it is invested with divine authority. It is not a thing in mere "*word*," it transcends all language, however logical in force or rhetorical in beauty, it is "*power*," the "power of God unto salvation." Here is—

VI. A SOLEMN PROPOSAL. "What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod or in love, and in the spirit

of meekness." In any case I shall come as a father. Shall I come as a father to chastise you with a "rod," or with looks of "love" and words of commendation and sympathy? God's minister is bound to deal with men according to their states of mind. His ministry to some must be as the severity of Sinai, with others as the tenderness of Calvary. Evermore is it true that the effects of divine visitations depend on the spirit in which they are received, and what this spirit shall be is for man to determine. God says to every man, "What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love and in the spirit of meekness?" This is the solemn proposal.

ABIDE IN CHRISTLINESS WHATEVER THE CONDITION IN LIFE.

"BUT IF THE UNBELIEVING DEPART, LET HIM DEPART,"
&c.—1 Cor. vii. 15-24.

As St. Paul seems desirous that most of his utterances in this chapter should not be regarded as the language of inspiration, but rather that of his own private judgment (for twice he gives the assurance), we may be justified in criticising his opinions. His opinions here refer to three conditions in man's existence on earth: matrimonial life, ecclesiastical connection, and domestic slavery; and concerning each of these, he says, "*Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.*" Now if by "*calling*" here he means that condition of life in which we find ourselves, irrespective of our choice, or into which we have entered by depraved choice, I

can scarcely think that his principle here can be accepted. Apply it for example to—

I. MATRIMONIAL LIFE. If two persons have entered into this, of all relationships the most solemn, whose temperaments, beliefs, tendencies, tastes, and habits are soon found to be so antipathetic as to produce nothing but constant quarrelings and mutual miseries, are they to “abide” in that state? If Paul means this, we cannot accept his counsel, for such unions are not marriages at all. But he does not mean that, for in the fifteenth and other verses of this chapter he seems to authorise a separation. “*But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases.*” Chain two vessels together on the ocean, allowing them to be some yards or even feet apart, and in the storm they will soon tear themselves to pieces and go down into the depths. But if you so rivet them together that the twain will be one, they will be mutual helps, and they will stand the tempest. So in marriage. Unless the two souls are so tightly rivetted or clasped together by the strongest mutual affection, it is better to separate. If they are only joined by a chain forged by civil or ecclesiastical law, the speedier that chain is snapped asunder the better for both. Philanthropy is justified in promoting the divorce of such, and in this age methinks it will find plenty of this merciful work to do. Apply this principle to—

II. ECCLESIASTICAL CONNECTION. “*Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised? Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised.*” Does Paul mean by this, if you find yourself in an ecclesiastical system which has worthless or

pernicious rites and ceremonies, abide in it, make no effort to abolish the unspiritual institutions? If you are in a church which exalts ceremonies and creeds, works for money and by money, and thus misrepresents the sublime genius of the gospel, continue where you are? If he does, we cannot accept his advice. But he does not mean this, for it is opposed not only to his own teaching, but to his own religious life. Apply this principle to—

III. DOMESTIC SLAVERY. “*Art thou called being a servant*” (slave)? Does Paul mean if you find yourself the entire property of another, and treated by your master as mere goods and chattels, make no effort to break your bonds and to realise your freedom? If he meant this, we repudiate his doctrine; it strikes against those aspirations for liberty, which are as deep as the human soul, and as wide as humanity. But he does not mean this, as the history of his life and the genius of his teaching show.

What, then, does he mean? The principle, “*let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called*,” he here lays down in connection with these three things, matrimonial life, ecclesiastical connection, and domestic slavery. And if he means by “*calling*,” condition of life, it cannot apply to either. But by “*calling*” Paul does not mean this. “‘*Calling*’ here must not be regarded in the modern sense of profession or condition of life; it is nowhere so used in the New Testament, but always signifies God calling to us (see Rom. xi. 29; Eph. i. 18). Continue to be Christians of the kind which God’s call to Christianity made you. If you were circumcised, and so God’s call into the Christian Church made you a circumcised

Christian, continue so; don't do anything which would seem to imply that some other change in addition to your call was necessary to complete your admission to the Church." Understanding the "*calling*" here, as I do, to be personal religion or Christliness which is elsewhere called the "heavenly calling," Paul's advice to abide in that state, in whatever relationship or condition we are found, is intelligible and right. In relation to *matrimony*, it will then mean this: Though you feel your conjugal relation to be such a bondage and misery that you break away from it, sever your connection with your partner, don't fail to "*abide in your calling*," or in your religion. Whatever your domestic grievances, and storms, and separations, hold fast to your religion. Though you lose your wife or your husband, hold fast your religion, your "*calling*." In relation to *ecclesiastical connections*, it will mean this: Whether you are "circumcised" or uncircumcised, whether you continue in your old Church connections or break away from them, "abide" in your "*calling*," your religion, that is something that is independent of all ecclesiastical institutions and ceremonies, can live with or without them. In relation to *domestic slavery*, it will mean this: Whether you are satisfied with your bondage, and settle down in it, or struggle to break your fetters and rise into full freedom, "*abide in your calling*," your religion. Personal Christianity may exist in all conditions of life; it is independent of family relations, independent of ecclesiastical institutions, independent of social distinctions, whether slave or master, rich or poor, and where it exists it should be retained amidst all changes and at all costs. "*Abide in your calling.*"

PERSONAL CHRISTIANITY FOR THE BOND AND THE FREE.

“FOR HE THAT IS CALLED IN THE LORD, BEING A SERVANT, IS THE LORD’S FREEMAN : LIKEWISE ALSO HE THAT IS CALLED, BEING FREE, IS CHRIST’S SERVANT. YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE ; BE NOT YE THE SERVANTS OF MEN. BRETHREN, LET EVERY MAN WHEREIN HE IS CALLED, THEREIN ABIDE WITH GOD.”—1 *Cor.* vii. 22-24.

Although the remarks in our previous sketch include these three verses, there is sufficient meaning in them to justify, if not to require, a separate notice. Understanding, as before intimated, the expression, “*called in the Lord,*” and again, “*abide with God,*” to mean *personal Christianity*, the verses include three general truths—

I. That personal Christianity may be possessed BY THOSE IN SLAVERY AS WELL AS BY THOSE IN FREEDOM. “*For he that is called in the Lord being a servant (a slave) is the Lord’s freeman.*” Slavery under the Greek and Roman governments was an established institution, in Corinth slaves abounded. Many of these had been converted by the Gospel, and were in connection with the Corinthian Church. Naturally enough some would desire their emancipation, and the more so as Christianity gave them a sublime sense of their manhood. Paul’s advice is not to be too anxious on the subject of their enfranchisement, but rather to be anxious to “*abide*” in their “*calling,*” their religion. Christianity is for man as man, not for him as rich or poor, erudite or rude, bond or free, but for him as a man ; it comes to him as outward nature comes to him, with equal free-

ness and fitness for all. The physical, civil, or ecclesiastical condition of a man, therefore, in this life is no excuse for his not becoming a Christian : though bound in chains, his soul is free, free to think, to resolve, to worship, and it is with the soul that Christianity has to do. Hence religion in slavery is not an uncommon fact. Slaves were members of many of the first churches, and religion reigned amongst a large number of those who were held in bondage in the Southern States of America. Another truth involved is—

II. That the possession of personal Christianity, whether by the bond or the free, INVESTS MAN WITH THE HIGHEST LIBERTY. He is the “*Lord’s freeman*” whoever he is, the Lord has emancipated his soul however firmly manacled his bodily limbs. All the inner chains that bound his soul to mere earthly influence, fleshly pleasures, and sinful pursuits, are snapped asunder, and he revels in the liberty wherewith “Christ makes His people free.” What freedom like this freedom from the dominion and consequences of moral wrong. This is the “glorious liberty of the children of God.”

“He is the freeman who the truth makes free,
And all are slaves besides.”

Another truth involved is—

III. That the possession of the highest liberty LESSENS NO MAN’S MIGHTY OBLIGATION TO SERVE CHRIST. “*Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men.*” All creatures are the property of the Creator. No creature owns itself. The highest angel has nothing in him that he can call his own. Man is not merely the property of God on the ground of creature-ship, but on the ground of Christ’s interposition. “Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price, therefore

glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." This being the case, however free and independent of men, you must ever be the servant of Christ, serve him heartily, faithfully, loyally, and for ever. His service is perfect freedom, His service is heaven.

CONCLUSION:—See how Christianity is to work out necessary reformatations for the world, not by force but by influence, not from without but from within, by working from the centre to the circumference. "There are," says *F. W. Robertson*, "two mistakes which are often made upon this subject: one is the error of supposing that outward institutions are unnecessary for the formation of character, and the other, that of supposing that they are all that is required to form the human soul. If we rightly understand the duty of a Christian man, it is this, to make his brethren free inwardly and outwardly: first inwardly, so that they may become masters of themselves, rulers of their passions, having the power of self-rule and self-control; and then outwardly, so that there may be every power and opportunity of developing the inward life: in the language of the prophet, 'to break the rod of oppression, and let the oppressed go free.'"

"Who are the free?"

They who have scorn'd the tyrant and his rod,
And bow'd in worship unto none but God,
They who have made the conqueror's glory dim,
Unchain'd in soul though manacled in limb,
Unwarp'd by prejudice, unawed by wrong,
Friends to the weak, and fearless of the strong.
They who could change not with the changing hour,
The self-same man in peril and in power.
True to the law of right, as warmly prone
To grant another's as maintain their own,
Foes of oppression wheresoe'er it be—

These are the proudly free!"

Germes of Thought.

THE PREACHER'S FINGER-POST.

The True Church a Feast.

“YOUR GLORYING IS NOT GOOD,” &c.—1 Cor. v. 6-13.

There are numerous Churches, but only one true Church, viz., that community of men who possess the spirit and exemplify the character of Jesus Christ. These verses lead us to look upon the true Church—

I. In its INTERNAL ENJOYMENTS. It is called here a “feast.” Truly the association of such Christly-spirited men, is a “feast” of the sublimest kind, a feast to each and all. A “feast,” First: Because it contains the choicest elements for spiritual *nourishment*. The quickening, elevating, and sug-

gestive ideas, current in such fellowship, current not only in language, but in looks and bearing, and acts and spirit constitute the soul banquet, a “feast of fat things,” &c. A “feast,” Secondly: Because it contains the choicest elements for spiritual *gratification*. A feast implies not merely nourishment, but pleasure and delight. What is a higher delight than a loving intercourse of kindred souls, free interchange of the most lofty thoughts and purest sympathies, loving souls flowing and reflowing into each other?

The true Church is not a moody, melancholy, assemblage, speaking in sepulchral tones, and singing doleful dirges, it is the brightest and most jubilant fellowship on earth. "These words have I spoken unto you, that your joy may be full."

"Rejoice, and again I say unto you, rejoice."

The verses lead us to look at the true Church—

II. In its EXTERNAL RELATION TO THE UNGODLY.

First: There is a connection with ungodly men that it *must* avoid. They must not be admitted to its "feasts." "Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump as ye are unleavened, for even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." As the Jews put away leaven at the celebration of the Passover, so all corrupt men must be excluded from the Church feasts. Christ is its Passover, its Feast.

It is suggested that the presence of corrupt men at the feast would be *contagious*. It would be likely to act as "leaven" through the community. As leaven put into a lump of dough, spreads from particle to particle ferments in its process, spreads through the whole and assimilates all to its own character, so may work a bad man's spirit through the community of the good. Therefore, because it is so contagious and pernicious, exclude it. "Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." No Church that has such leaven in it, whatever its intellectual, social, or spiritual advantages, has any reason for exultation. "Your glorying is not good," says Paul, "Know ye not that a little leaven

leaveneth the whole lump?" Be grave, be serious, look well to the moral character of your members. Secondly: There is a connection with ungodly men that it *cannot* avoid. "I wrote unto you in an Epistle not to company with fornicators, yet, not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters: for then must ye needs go out of the world." You cannot avoid contact and some kind of intercourse with the ungodly men outside. You cannot attend to the temporal affairs of your life without them. Nor can you discharge your spiritual obligations without going amongst them. As a Christian you are bound to go amongst them, to correct their mistakes, to enlighten their darkness, to reprove their wrongs, and to endeavour

to "turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God." Over such you have no legal control, you can exercise no jurisdiction, they are without. You have no power to exclude them from your neighbourhood, or your country, they are to be left alone in that respect. "Them that are without God judgeth." But if you find such characters inside the Church, you are to deal with them. "But now I have written unto you, not to keep company if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one no, not to eat." Observe here:—(1) Sin in man takes various forms. Paul adds to the incestuous man, the "fornicator," the "covetous" man, the "idolater," the "railer," the "drunkard,"

the "extortioner," all have to be avoided! Sin is to be avoided whatever form it takes; and it takes many forms. What is a temptation to one man, is not to another. Hence one is tempted to be a "fornicator," another a miser, "covetous," another an "idolater," worshipping false gods, an-

other a scorner, a "railer," another a "drunkard," intemperate, another an "extortioner," over-reaching, over-exacting, tyrannic. (2) In whatever forms — this "leaven" — shows itself, it must not be tolerated for a moment. It must be excluded at once.

The True Reformation.

"KNOW YE NOT THAT THE UNRIGHTEOUS SHALL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD? BE NOT DECEIVED: NEITHER FORNICATORS, NOR IDOLATERS, NOR ADULTERERS, NOR EFFEMINATE, NOR ABUSERS OF THEMSELVES WITH MANKIND, NOR THIEVES, NOR COVETOUS, NOR DRUNKARDS, NOR REVILERS, NOR EXTORTIONERS, SHALL INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD. AND SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU: BUT YE ARE WASHED, BUT YE ARE SANCTIFIED, BUT YE ARE JUSTIFIED IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, AND BY THE SPIRIT OF OUR GOD."—1 Cor. vi. 9-11.

Reformation of some kind or other is an object most earnestly pursued by all in every land who are alive to the woes and wrongs of life. Some of the reformations sought are of a questionable utility, none will prove of

any essential and permanent service but that presented in the text. The reformation is—

I. A reformation in the MORAL CHARACTER OF MANKIND. "*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of*

God? *Be not deceived, neither fornicators nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,*" &c. Sin, which may be defined as *self-gratification*, is here presented in a variety of forms, "*fornication*," idolatry, avarice, intemperance, &c. All these manifestations are hideous manifestations of the same ungodly principle, self-gratification. The principle of sin, like holiness, is one and simple, but the forms are multifarious. Now these morally corrupt classes we are here told were changed, they were "*washed*," and "*sanctified*," and "*justified*," which stripped of figure means : — they were changed in the very root and fountain of their character. They were, to use Scripture phraseology, *converted, regenerated, created anew* in Christ Jesus to good works. The

reformation was not doctrinal ecclesiastic, or institutional, but moral. The reformation is—

II. A reformation INDISPENSABLE TO A HAPPY DESTINY. What is the only happy destiny for man? To "*inherit the kingdom of God*." What is the "*Kingdom of God*?" Righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost. It is the reign of truth, purity, light, harmony, and blessedness. To "*inherit*" that empire, to be in it not as occasional visitors, but as *permanent* citizens, holding fellowship with its Sovereign, and mingling with the great and the good of all worlds—this is our high destiny. For this we were made, and for nothing lower. Hence Christ urges us to "*seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness*," which means, come under the Divine reign of truth and right. Now there is no getting into this

kingdom without this moral reformation. All who have not undergone this reformation are excluded. It is:—

III. A reformation EFFECTED BY THE REDEMPITIVE AGENCY OF CHRIST. “*And such were some of you, but ye are (were) washed, but ye are (were) sanctified, but ye are (were) justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*” This means that they had been cleansed from all moral foulness, “*washed*,” that they had been consecrated to holiness, “*sanctified*,” that they had been made right in their being and relationships, “*justified*.” And all this how? “*In the name of the Lord*

Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” This is the reformative measure, the Gospel: nothing on this earth will effect this moral change but this. Not the enactments of legislations, not the creations of genius not scientific systems. I disparage none of these, but they cannot effect this reformation of soul, the reformation which humanity wants, a reformation without which all other reformations are but reformations on parchments, a change in mere outward forms of life. “Marvel not that I say unto you ye must be born again.” Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.”

FITNESS FOR HEAVEN.

“O may the heavenly prospect fire
Our hearts with ardent love,
Till wings of faith and strong desire
Bear every thought above!
Prepare us, Lord, by grace divine,
For Thy bright courts on high,
Then bid our spirits rise and join
The chorus of the sky.”

E. Steele.

Seeds of Sermons on St. Paul's Epistle to Philippians.

Having gone through all the verses in the Epistle to the Ephesians (see "Homilist," Vol. xxii. to xxviii.), we proceed to develop, with our usual brevity, the precious germs of truth contained in this letter. The following remarks, as a standing introduction, may contribute some portion of light to the whole Epistle:—Notice (1) *The residence of the persons addressed.* Philippi—whose ancient name was Crenides—was a city of Macedonia, and called after the name of Philip of Macedon, because he rebuilt and fortified it, B.C. 358, and afterwards colonised by Julius Caesar, who invested the population with the privilege of a Roman City. It was the first place in Europe where the Gospel was preached by Paul, an account of which we have in the sixteenth chapter of the Acts. It was during his second missionary tour, and about A.D. 53.—Notice (2) *The occasion of the Epistle.* The contributions which the Philippians had made towards supplying the Apostle's necessities when a prisoner at Rome, evidently prompted its production.—Notice (3) *The scene from which the Epistle was addressed.* That it was from Rome where he was a prisoner is clear, from chapters i. 1-13, iv. 22. It would seem from the Epistle that he was expecting a speedy decision of his case, and hoped to obtain his release. Epaphroditus had been despatched to him from the Philippian Church with pecuniary contributions for the Apostle's relief, and on his return the Apostle entrusted this letter for conveyance. This would be about A.D. 63.—Notice (4) *The general character of the Epistle.* It is all but free from any censure, and breathes a warm and generous feeling through every part. The Epistle gives us the impression that the Philippian Church was one of the most pure, consistent, and generous, of that age. About 40 or 50 years after this Epistle was written, we are informed that Ignatius, on his way to martyrdom passed through Philippi, and was most warmly received in that city.]

No. XV.

Rejoicing, Eschewing, and Imitating.

"FINALLY, MY BRETHREN, REJOICE IN THE LORD," &c.—*Phil.* iii. 1-3.

THESE verses present three subjects for reflection, the Being to rejoice in, the men to avoid, the worship to imitate.

I. THE BEING TO REJOICE IN. "*Finally, brethren, rejoice in the Lord.*" The Lord means undoubtedly Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all men, but why rejoice in Him? First: Because of His *peerless excellence*. He is the morally beautiful. Every moral virtue is united, harmonised, and coruscates in His character. Nothing in-

spires the heart with higher and purer joy than *beauty*. Admiration is happiness of a high type. The admiration of art is a joy, the admiration of nature a greater joy, the admiration of moral excellence is the highest joy of all. "*Rejoice in the Lord.*" Secondly: Because of His *vital relationship*. He is our dearest Friend, our elder Brother, our All-merciful, and Almighty Redeemer. Well might we rejoice in such a relationship. My Redeemer is mine, and I am His. Thirdly: Because of His *benevolent enterprise*. What

philanthropic heart does not rejoice in the enterprise of any man to mitigate the woes and increase the happiness of His species? But what an enterprise is the enterprise of Christ! It is to break every fetter, unlock every prison door, dispel every cloud of ignorance and sorrow; it is to tread all human evils in the dust, hush all sorrows, wipe away all tears from off all faces. Well might the Apostle enjoin the Philippians to "*rejoice in the Lord.*" Sad that such an injunction should be required, for it might well have been supposed that all who knew the Lord would "*rejoice*" in Him. This is a command. As truly a command as the command to believe, repent, not to steal, not to murder; and to break this command is as great a sin as to break any command in the Decalogue. To be happy in the Lord, and there is happiness nowhere else, is a moral obligation. The verses present to us—

II. THE MEN TO AVOID. "*To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous (irksome) but for you it is safe.*" What things does the Apostle mean? Manifestly the warning which follows, "*Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers.*" The Apostle here characterises a class of men as "*dogs.*" In Rev. xxii.

15, this class — there also called dogs—are described as excluded from the kingdom of heaven. Christ to the Syro-Phoenician woman spoke of the Gentiles as dogs (Matt. xv. 26). He did this, however, in accordance with the usage of His countrymen. Elsewhere, the Heavenly Teacher speaks of some men as "*swine.*" The temperaments, disposition, and characters of men are widely different. "All flesh is not the same flesh." The men against whom the Apostle warns the Philippians here were, First: Men of a *canine spirit*. Ill-tempered men, snarling at all who differed from them. Who does not know men of the dog spirit? The querulous tone, the curl of scorn on the lip, the sardonic grin reveal their canine nature. They were, Secondly: Men of a canine spirit, who were in *connection with the Church*. "*Beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.*" They were Judaising teachers who endeavoured to turn away men from the simplicity of the Gospel by promoting Jewish rites and ceremonies, and thus they were evil-doers. Show me the man whose religion is sensuous, ritualistic, and technical, and you will show me the man who in all probability displays

this canine spirit. A more ill-natured class of men I have never known than members of Calvinistic, Antinomian, and Ritualistic Churches, and they reveal more of the dog than of the angel. Now Paul says avoid such, do not argue with them, do not "cast pearls before swine," do not put yourself in their power, stand aloof from them, heed neither their bark or their grin. The verses present—

III. THE WORSHIP TO IMITATE. "*For we are the circum-*

cision which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." The worship here is marked by three things. First: By spirituality. "*Worship God in the Spirit.*" Secondly: By joyousness. "*Rejoice in Christ Jesus.*" There is no worship without happiness, true worship is happiness. Thirdly: By divine confidence. "*Have no confidence in the flesh.*"*

Seeds of Sermons

FROM THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS.

Evil—the same in Principle though not in Form.

"NOW JEHORAM, THE SON OF AHAB, BEGAN TO REIGN OVER ISRAEL," &c.—2 Kings iii. 1-5.

Two subjects are here illustrated—

I. THAT WHILST THE FORMS OF EVIL MAY CHANGE, THE PRINCIPLE MAY CONTINUE RAMPANT. "*And he (that is Jehoram) wrought evil in the sight of the Lord, but not like his father and his mother.*" His father and

mother worshipped Baal, but the very "*image*" of the idol "*that his father had made he put away.*" But notwithstanding that "*he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam.*" Observe: First, Though the existing generation sins not in the form of the preceding, their sin is not less sin on that account. The forms in which barbarians, and our uncivilised ancestors sinned,

* See "Homilist," Vol. xli., page 281.

appear gross and revolting to us; nevertheless, our sins are not the less real and heinous in the sight of God. Our civilisation hides the revolting hideousness, but leave its spirit perhaps, more active than ever. Your father's prominent sin, perhaps, was that of drunkenness, but though you touch not the inebriating cup, you sin in other forms; the forms, perhaps, of vanity, avarice, ambition, &c. Observe: Secondly, That mere external reformatations may leave the spirit of evil as rampant as ever. Jehoram "*put away the image of Baal,*" but the spirit of idolatry remained in him in all its wonted force. "*He cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin: he departed not therefrom.*" This is ever true. Religiously you may destroy popery as an organisation, and yet leave the spirit of religious superstition, intolerance, and pride, even more vigorous than ever, to assume other forms. So of political institutions. You may destroy this form of government or that, monarchical or democratic, and yet leave the spirit in which these forms work, vital and vigorous to manifest itself in other forms. Another subject illustrated here is—

II. That whilst sin may

only be in the form of neglect of duty IT MAY IN THE CASE OF ONE MAN ENTAIL SERIOUS EVILS ON POSTERITY. "*And Mesha, king of Moab, was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs and one hundred thousand rams, with the wool. But it came to pass when Ahab was dead that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.*" Moab was a tributary to the kingdom of Israel, and contributed largely to its revenue, not in cash, but in cattle, but not the less valuable on that account. "*One hundred thousand lambs and one hundred thousand rams with the wool.*" But now a rebellion had broken out, and a serious revolt was threatened. Why was this? Matthew Henry ascribes it to the neglect of Ahaziah, the former king, the brother of Jehoram. He made no attempt to avoid such a catastrophe. Ah! sins of omission entail serious evils. The neglect of one generation brings miseries on another. The neglect of parents often brings ruin on the children. Negative sins are curses. "We have left undone the things we ought to have done," and who shall tell the result on all future times?

Worldly Rulers—Men in Trial Seeking Help from a Godly Man.

“AND KING JEHORAM WENT OUT OF SAMARIA THE SAME TIME AND NUMBERED ALL ISRAEL,” &c.—2 Kings iii. 6-12.

I. Here we have WORLDLY RULERS IN GREAT TRIAL. “*And king Jehoram went out of Samaria at the same time and numbered all Israel. And he went out and sent to Jehosaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me.*” The expected revolt of Moab, threatened the ruin of Jehoram and his empire, and he, smitten with alarm, numbers all Israel, and hurries to Jehosaphat to seek his aid. They, with their armies, go forth to meet in battle their enemy on a seven days’ journey, enduring the privation of water for themselves and their cattle. At the end of their journey, disheartened and exhausted, they reached a crisis of terrible anxiety and danger. Worldly rulers have their trials. “Un-easy is the head that wears a crown.” What terrible ends in past ages kings have come to, and to-day all the thrones of Europe seem to be tottering to their fall. Providence destines that a man who aspires to the highest office must pay a terrible price for it. The trials

of high office, added to the natural trials of man as man, are often overwhelming. Well may we pray for kings and “all that have authority over us.” Here we have worldly rulers in great trial—

II. SEEKING HELP FROM A GODLY MAN. “*But Jehosaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may enquire of? And one of the king of Israel’s servants answered and said, Here is Elisha,*” &c. Mark the cry, “*Is there not a prophet of the Lord?*” The question is answered, and the three kings, that of Samaria, of Israel, and of Edom, go in earnest quest of him. They “*went down to him.*” Why did these great magnates of the ancient world go in their distress to one lonely man, a man who not only did not believe in their gods, but denounced them? Why did they not go to their heathen fanes and consult their priests? Surely their doing so now, First: Proved their instinctive belief in the existence of one God, the Maker and Manager of worlds. Man always in overwhelming distress turns away from his systems and theories, and looks up to the Everlasting One. Secondly:

Proved their faith in the power of a truly good man with that God. This is common, every day sceptics and worldlings on their death-bed are sending for those to visit them who they believe to be men of God. The evil must ever bow before the good. What an illustration we have of this in the case of the 275 men on board the ship tossed in the dangerous tempest on her way from Cæsarea to Rome, with the Apostle Paul on board! Paul was a poor prisoner in chains, and the passengers were made up of soldiers, and merchants, and men of science, but to whom did they look in the turmoil? Paul, who at the outset, when "the south winds blew softly" was nothing in that vessel,

became the moral commander during the tempest. Amidst the wild roaring of the elements, the cries of his fellow voyagers, the crashes of the plunging ship, the awful howl of death, in all he walked upon the creaking deck with a moral majesty, before which captain, merchant, soldier, and centurion, bowed with loyal awe. So it has ever been, so it must ever be. The good show their greatness in trials, and in their trials, the evil, however exalted their worldly position, are compelled to appreciate them. How often do the world's great men on death-beds seek the attendance, sympathies, counsel, and prayers of those godly ones whom they despised in health!

Homiletical Breviaries.

A Two-fold Knowledge.

"NOW AS TOUCHING THINGS OFFERED UNTO IDOLS, WE KNOW THAT WE ALL HAVE KNOWLEDGE. KNOWLEDGE PUFFETH UP, BUT CHARITY EDIFIETH. AND IF ANY MAN THINK THAT HE KNOWETH ANY THING, HE KNOWETH NOTHING YET AS HE OUGHT TO KNOW. BUT IF ANY MAN LOVE GOD, THE SAME IS KNOWN OF HIM."—1 *Cor.* viii. 1-3.

Here a new subject is introduced. Paul had already touched on three difficult points in connection with the Corinthian Church, points on which it seems some of the members had written to him

for information. One referred to matrimony, another to ecclesiastical ritualism, another to slavery. Here he comes to the eating of meats that were offered to idols. Meats used for sacrificial purposes in the heathen temples were, according to custom, offered in Corinth for sale as food. In the Church at Corinth there were some who had scruples about the eating of such meat, and some who had not. Paul's information was sought on that subject, and in this chapter he supplies it. But in this sketch I confine my attention to the *two-fold knowledge* to which he here refers. I. A PRIDE-GENERATING knowledge. "*Knowledge puffeth up.*" By this knowledge he means, I presume, First: A knowledge that is *merely intellectual*. A stock of mental conceptions, concerning the various objects brought under attention. The objects might be material or spiritual, those referring to body or those referring to mind, those referring to the creature or those referring to the Creator. Now such knowledge, even though it be of a theological and ecclesiastical character, referring to God and to eternity, tends to self-conceit. Some of the greatest theologians and ecclesiastics are amongst the proudest men I know. He means, Secondly: A knowledge that is *essentially superficial*. Though mere intellectual knowledge has a tendency to generate pride, the more superficial that knowledge the stronger its tendency. The men who go farthest into the essence of things, take the widest view of the domain of knowledge, enter furthest into the arcana of nature will be the least-disposed to self-elation. The greater the scientist, the more humble of his class. Humboldt, Nebuhr, Newton, Davey, Brewster, were amongst the humblest of their race. Paul refers here to—II. A MAN-EDIFYING knowledge. "*Charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of Him.*" It appears from this, First: That "*charity*," or love to God, is the true knowledge. Love is the life and soul of all science. Mere intellectual knowledge, however great, is a tree without sap, without moral beauty or strengthening fruit; love is the root of the universe, and you must have love rightly to interpret love. It appears from this, Secondly: That this true knowledge builds up the soul. It "*edifieth.*" It builds it up, not as a house is built up, by putting dead stones and timber together, but as the oak is built up, by the world-appropriating force of its own life, compelling outward nature to deepen its roots, extend its bulk, multiply its branches, and push it higher towards the heavens.

HOMILETICAL BRIEFINGS.

It appears from this, Thirdly : That this true knowledge insures the approval of God. "*If any man love God, the same is known of Him.*" The word "*known*" must be taken in the sense of approval. In the last day, Christ will say to those who have not this love, "Depart from me, I never knew you," that is, never approved of you. This love for God in the heart converts the tree of intellectual knowledge into the tree of life.

The Proper Spirit for Theological Students.

"AND WHEN THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS WHICH WERE TO VIEW AT JERICHO," &c.—2 *Kings* ii. 15-18.*

The "sons of the prophets" were theological students, and they here manifest a spirit which may be considered alike becoming and necessary in all those who are set apart to study the revelations of God. I. Here is a spirit of REVERENCE. "And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, the spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him." Being convinced by the fact that Elisha had performed the same marvel that Elisha had—divided the waters of Jordan—that he was a divine prophet, they bowed in reverence before him. Though, perhaps, they knew that Elisha was taken from the plough, the manifestation of the divine in him, inspired them with solemn awe. He who has in him most of the divine should be the most revered. Reverence is an essential qualification for a student. The volatile and the frivolous, however superior in intellect, and however persistent their investigations, will never reach a true knowledge of God. Nothing is more incongruous, nothing more distressing to the eye of earnest men than the spirit of irreverence in theological halls. Biblical students should see in their tutors so much of the divine as to cause them to bow in reverence before them. True reverence is neither superstition nor sadness. II. Here is a spirit of ENQUIRY. These students earnestly desired to know what had become of Elijah, and they urged Elisha to send out fifty strong men in quest of him. No man will ever get true knowledge unless he has in him the spirit of earnest enquiry. The deepest cry of the student soul should be, "Where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place

* For remarks on verses 9-13, see "Homilist," vol. xi., p. 5; and on verses 14, "Homilist," vol. xiv., p. 49.

of understanding?" This spirit was *strong* in these sons of the prophets on this occasion. They so "urged" Elisha to send forth in quest of Elijah that we are told Elisha was "ashamed" to refuse them. But although the spirit of enquiry is essential to a student, and its earnestness is to be commended, it is often, alas, defective. It was so now. First: It was *wrongly directed*. They had a wrong apprehension, they imagined that the body of Elijah had been borne up to "some mountain," or "cast into some valley." Perhaps all science begins with an hypothesis, but the hypothesis must have some foundation. There was no foundation for the supposition of these sons of the prophets. Enquiry should start from facts. Secondly: It was *unsuccessful*. The fifty men went forth according to the students' request, and searched for "three days, but found him not." It is useless to search for subjects beyond our reach. You cannot find in the Bible what is not there, such as scientific systems, &c.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

CHRISTIANITY AND SECULARISM. A WRITTEN DEBATE BETWEEN
REV. GEORGE SEXTON, M.A., LL.D., AND CHARLES WATTS,
ESQ. London: Smart and Allen, Paternoster Row.

This is a debate on the subject, which is the better suited to meet the wants of mankind—Christianity or Secularism? It is an argumentative battle between two able combatants, veterans in such campaigns. Perhaps no man living can fight for Secularism more skilfully than Mr. Charles Watts, who is a man of unmistakable ability as a thinker, writer and orator. As to Dr. Sexton—with whom we are personally acquainted—concerning whose affluence in learning, power in reasoning, and majesty of eloquence, we have written more than once in these pages, we need only say that he appears here as a hero, with whom it would be an honour

for any man to fight. Through the whole of this debate there is none of that abusive scurrility which disgraces the speeches of our political leaders of both parties, and which, alas, in all ages, has characterised theological and religious controversies. Personal detractions, ungenerous inuendoes find no place in these pages. The bearing of each combatant is imposing in candour and magnanimity. This is just the book for the sceptical men of the age, both young and old. The Christian Evidence Society should secure for this volume a place in every town, village, and city of the empire. If such a philanthropist as Mr. Samuel Morley would take it in his hands and peruse it, we are satisfied that he would soon feel that he would render great service to the cause of truth, by promoting its circulation through the Kingdom. We understand that Dr. Sexton intends visiting America in September next, in order to lecture throughout the United States on subjects akin to those in this volume, and other subjects of scientific and philanthropic interest and importance. As we are constantly receiving letters from America, from ministers of all denominations, who are readers of "*The Homilist*," we trust they will give him a very hearty welcome, and we assure them that from his services they will receive a rich reward. The difficult questions they are constantly asking us, no man in England can answer better than Dr. Sexton.

PALESTINE EXPLORED. By ¹REV. J. NEIL, M.A. London: Nisbet and Co., Berners Street.

A few sentences from the Author's preface will put our readers in possession of the design and substance of this book: "These pages deal with the author's discoveries in the Holy Land, and those recently made there by others, which throw new light upon the Bible. His chief qualification for the work lies in his having enjoyed an official residence at Jerusalem for three years, from May 1871, to May 1874. During that time, he was called upon to traverse Palestine in many directions. The management of landed property, in various parts of the country, afforded him very special facilities for forming a close acquaintance with its natural features and modern life. Intimate relations with its various races, and more particularly with native Jews, amongst whom Hebrew is still a spoken language, gave further help. Nor must the advantage derived from the invaluable aid of the Palestine Exploration

Fund be overlooked. The greater part of the Ordnance Survey of Western Palestine, which, to the Biblical Student, is by far the most important scientific work of this scientific age, was accomplished during the period of the author's residence at Jerusalem, and he has watched its progress throughout." The writer in this book sketches such natural features, prevailing manners, customs, rites and colloquial expressions of the people of Palestine, as throw light on the Bible. This volume is both interesting and instructive, it is well written, and has a practical purpose.

THE DAISY. A JOURNAL OF PURE LITERATURE. Conducted by JOHN LOBB, F.R.G.S. VOL. X. London: "Christian Age" Office, Bude Street.

This is the tenth volume of one of the most interesting and instructive annuals of the age, and, we may add, by far the cheapest. Anecdotal sketches, corruscations of wit and humour, rhythmic verses, natural history and religious sentiment, the reasonable and the ridiculous, pieties and pufferies, fables and fashions, secularities and spiritualities, in fact, almost everything good, bad, and indifferent, that can charm the thoughtless and stimulate the thoughtful, crowd the pages of this handsome volume. The moral tone through the whole is good, and through all there breathes the spirit of popular Evangelicalism. It is one of the most cheering and jovial domestic visitors that can knock for admission at a family door.

THE GOSPEL OF GOD. By G. P. LILLEY, M.A. London: Nisbet & Co., Berners Street.

This book consists of eleven chapters. The subjects of which are, "The Living God," "The Essential Nature of God," "The Moral Nature of God," "The Creative Design of God," "Man's Withdrawal from God's Design," "The Forbearance of God," "The Specific Results of Sin Against God," "The Grace of God," "The Method of the Divine Salvation," "The Advent of the Kingdom of God," "The Development of the Kingdom of God." The theology of this book is that of the Assembly's Catechism, but the subjects are discussed in a Catholic spirit, and with distinguished ability. The work reveals much sacred learning, profound thought, and philosophic insight. As a specimen of the author's style of thought and expression we quote the following sentences concerning the personality of God:—"No argumentation is required to convince a man that he is a person, that is, an intelligent voluntary

agent. That fact is given him in the infallible dictates of consciousness, and instead of growing dimmer as the days and the years pass, the sense of it only becomes more sharpened and vivid. Precisely in the same fashion are we led into the conviction that God is also a personal God. Assured by the Gospel that He is the Being on whom we are dependent, it would violate every principle of our mental and moral constitution, did we not yield to Him the same faculties of thought and feeling and action that we ourselves possess. Standing in this relation of superiority to us, we demand that He should not be inferior to us in anything, and if we as men be endowed with the glory of personality it cannot be wanting in Him. Scripture thereof is everywhere full of the personal pronouns in describing the relations of God and men."

SERMONS. By J. OSWALD DYKES, M.A., D.D. London: James Nisbet, 21, Berner's-street.

Here is a volume of sermons from one of the ablest preachers of the Presbyterian Church. There are twenty-six discourses, the subjects of which are: "The First Christian Apology—The Gospel neither a Ritual nor a Philosophy—Preaching Christ Crucified—Christian Manliness—The condescension of God in Revelation—The Biblical Conception of Nature—The Witness of Creation to the Gospel—Consider the Lilies—The Doctrine of the Trinity—The Father's Pity and the Son's Sympathy—Poverty and Riches with Christ—Victim and Priest—The Intercession of Christ—Peace through the Knowledge of God—The Power of God's Arger—What value Christ sets on every Man—A Parable of two Sons—The New Self—The Second Conversion—Loving Jesus—Christ-like Service—The Perfect Example—Loneliness—Weep Not—The Saviour's Sorrow over Lost Men—The Church in Relation to her own Past." Although there is too much of the theology of the Assembly's Catechism in these sermons to command our entire approbation, they are so thoughtful, so reverent, so tender, and in many places so eloquent, that we most heartily recommend them.

THE SYMMETRY OF TIME. By GODFREY FAUSSETT, M.A. Oxford: Parker & Co.

It will be enough for our readers, in order for them to understand the character of this book, to give them the subjects discussed in the chapters. The Year, Day, The Week, Outline of Years, Constitution of the Primitive Year, Symbolism of the Moon and the Sun, The Outline of the Chronology of the Pentateuch, First Series of Patriarchs, Second Series of Patriarchs, Four Hundred and Thirty Years' Sojourn, The Week of Weeks, Deuteroprote Sabbath, The Great Week, The Sacred Day of Nisan and Tisn compared, Details of the Period before the Flood, The Days of Adam, The Birth of Seth, Enoch's Translation, The Flood, Details of the Period from the Flood to the Death of Serat, Details of the Four Hundred and Thirty Years' Sojourn, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, The Exodus, Chronological Table.



Leading Homily.

THE LEADING CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRULY GREAT GOSPEL MINISTER.

“AM I NOT AN APOSTLE? AM I NOT FREE?” &c.—
1 Cor. ix. 1-22.

TAKING these verses as a whole, they illustrate some of the leading characteristics of a truly great Gospel minister, and I offer the following remarks—

I. The greater the minister of Christ, the MORE INDEPENDENT OF CEREMONIAL RESTRICTIONS. Paul was one of the greatest, if not the greatest, ministers of Christ that ever existed. He was an apostle, and had “*seen Christ*,” a qualification that distinguished him as a minister from all, but eleven others, that ever lived. Besides this, his natural and acquired endowments, placed him in the very first rank of reasoners, scholars, and orators. He was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, &c. But see how this great minister regarded the mere conventionalities of religious society. “*Am I not an apostle? Am I not free?*” He refers, in all probability to the preceding chapter, which treats

of the eating of meat offered to idols, and concerning which he says, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth." As if he had said, I am free to eat that meat, and free to reject it, I am not bound by any conventional custom or ceremonial law, for I am "*an apostle*." Now it may be laid down as a universal truth, that the greater a gospel minister, the more independent of ceremonies. Indeed, the greater the man, always the more independent he is of forms, fashions, customs. Hezekiah called that which his countrymen worshipped "Nehushtan," a piece of brass. Cromwell called that glittering insignia of authority on the table of the House of Commons, and at which most of the members, perhaps, trembled with awe, a "bauble." Thomas Carlyle called all the pageantry of office and the glitter of wealth "shams." Burns called the swaggering lordling a "coof." How much more would a man like Paul—who possessed that spirit of Christ which gave him an insight into the heart of things—look down, not merely with indifference, but with contempt, upon all that the world considered great and grand! The more Christly inspiration a man has, the more he will discern degradation on thrones, and pauperism in mansions.

A famous French preacher began his funeral address over the coffin of his sovereign with these words, "There is nothing great but God." To the man whose soul is charged with the great ideas of God, all the distinctions amongst men are only as the distinctions existing among the various bubbles on the flowing stream. Some are a little larger than others, some are tinged by the sunbeam, and some are pallid in the

shade, but all have the same common nature, and all breaking into the abyss, are lost for ever.

“*Am I not free?*” says Paul. A grand thing this, to be free from all the conventionalities of society and the ceremonies of religion. What cared Elijah for the kings of Syria or Israel, or Judah? Nothing. Agrippa trembled before the moral majesty of Paul, even in chains. Oh, for such ministers as Paul in this age of hypocrisies and forms! Another remark suggested is—

II. The greater the minister of Christ, the HIGHER THE SERVICES HE RENDERS TO SOCIETY. What high service did this great minister St. Paul render to the members of the Corinthian Church? “*Are not ye my work in the Lord?*” “*The seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.*” Ye are, as far as ye are Christians, “*my work.*” I converted you, I turned you away from idols to the one true and living God, from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of Christ. No work on earth equal to this. “He that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways,” &c. This work which I effected in you “*in the Lord,*” or by the Lord, is a demonstration of my apostleship. What work again, I ask, approaches this in grandeur and importance? It is the work of creating men anew in Christ Jesus, it is the work of establishing that moral empire in the world, which is “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” The man who succeeds in accomplishing this work, thereby demonstrates the divinity of his ministry. Hence Paul says, “*Mine answer to them that do examine is this.*” Those that question or deny my apostleship I refer to the spiritual work I have accomplished; “*this is my answer,*” my defence.

Truly it may be said of Paul, "No man can do the works that thou doest, except God be with him." The only way by which we can prove ourselves true ministers is, not by words, but by spiritual works. Another remark suggested is—

III.—The greater the minister of Christ the MORE INDEPENDENT HE IS OF THE INNOCENT ENJOYMENTS OF LIFE. "*Have we not power to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?*" Paul claims the privilege to eat and drink as he pleased, and to marry or not according to his pleasure, to be a celibate or a benedict. Perhaps some of the members of the Corinthian Church questioned Paul's apostleship because he was not married. Those who belonged to Peter's party—who was a married man—would be likely to say Paul cannot be an apostle, for Cephas, who is an apostle, has his wife whom he takes about with him in the prosecution of his mission. And then the "*brethren of the Lord,*" too, they have their wives. Paul's reply to this is virtually, I have the power and the right to all connubial privileges and comforts, the right to feast at banquets, and to form domestic relations, but I forego them, I am independent of them, I have higher tastes and sublimer sources of enjoyment. "For me to live is Christ." He is the all and in all of my soul. The more brain and Christly inspiration a man has, the less carnal, and the less carnal the more independent of material enjoyments. Another remark suggested is—

IV.—The greater the minister of Christ the MORE CLAIM HE HAS TO THE TEMPORAL SUPPORT OF THOSE WHOM HE SPIRITUALLY SERVES. The apostle goes on from the

sixth to the fourteenth verse to say that he and Barnabas would be right if they were to forbear working for their livelihood, and claim their temporal support from those to whom they spiritually ministered. He goes on to indicate several reasons why he had a claim to their temporal support.

First: The general usage of mankind. "*Who goeth a warfare at any time at his own charges?*" &c. He draws three illustrations from human life to show the equity of the principle, from the soldier, the agriculturist, and the shepherd. Another reason was, Secondly: The principle of the Jewish law. "*Say I these things as a man, or saith not the law the same also?*" &c. On a space of hard ground called a threshing floor the oxen in Jewish times were driven to and fro over the corn thrown there, thus separating the husk from the grain. "God," says Matthew Henry, "had therein ordered that the ox should not be muzzled while he was treading out the corn, nor hindered from eating while he was preparing the corn, for man's use, and treading it out of the ear. But this law was not chiefly given out of God's regard to oxen or concern for them, but to teach mankind that all due encouragement should be given to those who are employed by us or labouring for our good, that the labourers should taste of the fruit of their labours." "*Doth God take care for oxen?*" Yes. He enjoined that the mouth of the working ox should not be muzzled, but should have food to eat. Is not man greater than the ox? And shall he work and be deprived of temporal supplies? Another reason was—

Thirdly: The principles of common equity. "*If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great*

thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" They had given to them far higher things, infinitely more important than the temporal support which they required. He who gives to his race Divine ideas, gives that which alone can secure the progress of humanity, both in temporal and spiritual good. True ideas destroy bad institutions and create good ones. Another reason was—Fourthly: Other Apostles and their wives were thus supported. "*Or only I and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?" . . . If others are partakers of this power over you are not we rather?"* This language implies that all the others who worked amongst them obtained their temporal support. Why should not we? Have we done less? Is our authority inferior? Another reason was—

Fifthly: The support of the Jewish priesthood. "*Do you not know that those who minister about holy things live of the things of the temple, and those who wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?"* "The first part of the passage refers to the general principle that the priests who were engaged in the temple services were supported from the various offerings which were brought there; and the second clause more definitely alludes to the particular fact that when a sacrifice was offered on the altar, the sacrificing priests as well as the altar had a share of the animal." Another reason was—

Sixthly: The ordination of Christ. "*Even so hath the Lord ordained that those who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.*" (See Matt. x. 10). "*Should live of the Gospel,*" not grow rich on the Gospel, but have from it that which is needful for subsistence. Looking at all that Paul says on that question here,

and at the immense service that a true minister renders to society, the conviction cannot be avoided that no man has a stronger claim to a temporal recompense for his labour than a true Gospel minister. Albeit no claims are so universally ignored. What Churches in these modern times tender to their ministers as an acknowledgment of their service is regarded as a charity, rather than a claim. Charity indeed! Call the money you pay to your butcher, baker, lawyer, doctor, charity; but in the name of all that is just, do not call that charity which you tender to the man who consecrates his entire being and time to impart to you the elements of eternal life. Another remark suggested is—

V. The greater the minister of Christ, the more READY TO SURRENDER HIS CLAIMS FOR THE SAKE OF USEFULNESS. Great as were the claims of Paul he magnanimously surrenders them all in order to become more useful. He would not feast at banquets, enjoy conjugal life, or take payment for his services, lest his usefulness should be in the least impaired. “*But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things that it should be so done unto me, for it were better for me to die than that any man should make my glorying void.*” I would sooner die than be dependent on you for a livelihood. Grand man! He stood before his congregations and said, “I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.”

The Preacher's Homiletical Commentary.

HOMILETIC SKETCHES ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

OUR PURPOSE.—Many learned and devout men have gone *Philologically* through this *TEHILLIM*, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volume; within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough HOMILETIC treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

OUR METHOD.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) THE HISTORY of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) ANNOTATIONS of the passages. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase or allusion that may occur. (3) The ARGUMENT of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is amongst the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) The HOMILETICS of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately deduced, as to suggest such thoughts and indicate such sermonizing methods as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

No. CLIX.

The Moral Government of the World, and the Experience of Piety.

“SURELY THOU WILT SLAY THE WICKED, O GOD: DEPART FROM ME THEREFORE, YE BLOODY MEN. FOR THEY SPEAK AGAINST THEE WICKEDLY, AND THINE ENEMIES TAKE THY NAME IN VAIN. DO NOT I HATE THEM, O LORD, THAT HATE THEE? AND AM NOT I GRIEVED WITH THOSE THAT RISE UP AGAINST THEE? I HATE THEM WITH PERFECT HATRED: I COUNT THEM MINE ENEMIES.”—*Ps. cxxxix. 19-22.*

As different interpretations have been given of this passage in our version it may be well to transcribe the translation of one of our greatest Biblical scholars—

“ Oh that Thou wouldest slay the wicked Eloah,
And ye men of blood-guiltiness depart from me
They who mention Thee craftily,
Speak out deceitfully—Thine adversaries.

Should I not hate those who hate Thee, Jahve,
 And be indignant at those who rise up against Thee?
 With the utmost hatred do I hate them,
 They are to me as mine own enemies."

What a description of wicked men we have here! They are called "*bloody men*," as "*speaking against*" God, taking His "*name in vain*," and rising up against Him. Whether the spirit which the author breathes into these utterances is commendable or not, or whether when he uttered them he was the subject of Divine inspiration is a question open to discussion. I take the words as they are, as suggesting two great facts, the one in relation to the *moral government of God*, and the other in relation to the *experience of piety*.

I. Here is a fact in relation to the MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD. That fact is the ultimate ruin of the wicked. "*Surely Thou wilt slay the wicked, O God.*" If this is a prayer it is impious, if it is a prediction it is a truth. The wicked will ultimately be ruined. First: This fact agrees with the *dictates of conscience*. The consciences of mankind the world over proclaim it. Secondly: This fact agrees with the *principle of moral causation*. Sin brings ruin, every act of transgression carries with it its penalty, and tends to death. Thirdly: This fact agrees with the *declaration of the Bible*, "Be sure your sins will find you out." "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption."

II. Here is a fact in the EXPERIENCE OF PIOUS MEN. "*Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee?*" Whether these words breathe piety or not, they suggest a fact in the experience of all Godly men. It is this,—*antipathy to the character that is opposed to God*. First:

The fact is a *necessity*. From the laws of our mental constitution it is impossible for us to love those who hate the object we most love. "Is any offended," says Paul, "and I burn not?" It is of the nature of love to identify the lover with the loved. Piety is supreme love to God, and this supreme love will make us feel one with God, feel, so to speak, as He feels. Love makes the twain one, hence it is impossible for a man truly to love God and not hate that which is opposed to Him. Secondly : This fact is an *excellence*. It is morally right and grand to see the Godly man rising up in indignation against all that is opposed to the character and will of God.

Witnesses of the Resurrection.

"HIM GOD RAISED UP," &c.—*Acts* x. 40, 41.

WHY did not our Saviour show Himself after His resurrection to all the people? Why only to witnesses chosen before of God? Because this was the most effectual means of propagating His religion through the world. I. Consider what would have been the *probable effect of a public exhibition of His resurrection*. Suppose our Saviour had shown Himself as openly as before He suffered crucifixion, preaching in the temple, talking to His disciples, &c., the people would perhaps have shouted hosannas once more, but the impression would soon have passed away, and then only a few of the multitude would have had an opportunity of testing the reality of the fact that He had risen. In all probability they would have denied the miracle. II. He showed Himself to a few, *because humanly speaking only a few could be made instruments*. No one could become witnesses of the fact of His resurrection who did not know Him intimately before His death. The apostles alone had this knowledge. III. Every great change is *effected by the few, and not by the many*. By satisfying the few the many would be influenced. The few, thoroughly convinced, become convicers of the many. This is always the case. The twelve apostles overturned the powers of darkness, and established the kingdom of righteousness.

G. H. NEWMAN, D.D.

Sermonic Saplings.

THE CHRISTLY ASSEMBLY.

“NOW CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS,” &c.—1 Cor. xii. 1-31.



LL throughout this chapter refers to the *Christly Assembly*. I use this word in preference to the word Church, for what are now called Churches, are not always assemblages of genuine Christians. Overlooking the more minute parts of this remarkable chapter, and taking a broad glance at the whole, there are three important subjects very suggestive, and capable of amplification, which are discoverable. These are that every member of this Christly community has *passed through a radical change*, that every member has *received special endowments from God*, and that every member should regard these endowments as *parts of a vital whole*.

I. Every member of this Christly community has PASSED THROUGH A RADICAL CHANGE. “*Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.*” The change here spoken of, it is to be observed, is a change from the spirit of the Gentiles or the world, to the Spirit of Christ. The most radical change that can take place in a man is a change in his predominant disposition, or moral spirit. Such a disposition is in truth man’s moral heart. This change is here described—

First: Negatively. No man who has experienced it has anything irreverent or profane in his spirit towards Christ. "*No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed.*" Secondly: Positively, "*No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.*" "*Can say,*" not of course merely the words, for all could easily do that, but with the heart and life. This change is the production of the Divine Spirit,—of "*the Holy Ghost.*" Now no man is a member of the true Church who has not experienced this transformation; who has not renounced the spirit of the world and come under the control of the Spirit of Christ. There are such who are found in connection with no conventional Church, and there may be conventional Churches where no such are found. All such, however, wherever found, belong to the Church of the "first-born written in heaven."

II. Every member of this Christly community has RECEIVED SPECIAL ENDOWMENTS FROM GOD. "*Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit,*" &c. (verses 4 to 12). Without pausing to interpret the meaning of these endowments, I simply remark that they seem capable of being divided into three classes: (1) Those of intellect. "*Wisdom,*" "*knowledge,*" &c. (2) Those of "*faith,*" operating faith in words, in deeds, and in "*discernment.*" (3) Those of language. "*Tongues,*" speaking and interpreting. Now all responsible men have *intellect* of some kind and amount. All men have *faith* of some sort. Man has an instinctive *tendency* to believe, hence his credulity is proverbial. And he is *necessitated* to believe: he could not carry on the business of life without faith. All men also have a *language* of some kind or other. What, then,

do we mean when we say that the endowments here refer to intellect, faith, and language? Simply this, that the man who has come into possession of the Christly Spirit and purpose, and is thus a member of the genuine Church, will receive a new force and elevation of *intellect*; a new object and energy of *faith*; a new style and emphasis of *expression*, a new tongue. This great variety of endowments reveals, First: The *sovereignty* of the Spirit. Why did He bestow any at all? Still more, why so different to different men? The only answer is because it pleased Him so to do. "He worked all things after the counsel of His own will." Secondly: The *affluence* of the Spirit. All these great and varied spiritual and mental endowments came from Him. He is the inexhaustible Fountain, not only of all life, but of all spiritual endowments. Thirdly: The *benevolence* of the Spirit. All these varied endowments bestowed for what purpose? To "*profit withal.*" All for the highest usefulness—spiritual happiness is the end of the creation. Since all our endowments are the free gifts of God, there is no reason for those of the humblest to be dissatisfied, nor for those who have the most splendid to be exultant.

III. Every member should regard these endowments as PARTS OF A VITAL WHOLE. The whole is here called the "*body of Christ.*" As the soul resides in the body, directs the body, reveals itself in the body, so Christ in the true Church. "*For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many, are one body, so also is Christ,*" &c. Great is the variety in the various faculties, organs, and parts of the human body. Some

are larger and more comely than others, but each, even the most insignificant and uncomely, are equally essential. "*Those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary,*" &c.* How preposterous would it be for one vital part of the body to contend with another for importance and supremacy! Yet not more absurd than for one member of a Church to contend with another. This is Paul's argument against the divisions that were rampant in the Corinthian Church.

"What if the foot ordain'd the dust to tread,
Or hand to toil, aspired to be the head;
What if the head, the eye, or ear refused
To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?
Just as absurd for any part to claim
To be another in this general frame;
Just as absurd to mourn the fate or pains,
The great directing mind of all ordains.
All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul."—*Pope*.

ASPECTS OF RESPONSIBILITY.

"AS CONCERNING, THEREFORE, THE EATING OF THOSE THINGS THAT ARE OFFERED TO IDOLS," &c.—1 *Cor.* viii. 4-13.

THIS paragraph suggests three general remarks—

I. THAT THE MORAL OBLIGATIONS OF ALL MEN ARE DETERMINED BY THEIR RELATION TO THE ONE GOD, AND HIS SON.
"*As concerning, therefore, the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.*" There are many objects in the world

* See "*Homilist*," Vol. xv., p. 86. Also vol. xlv., p. 330.

that men call gods, and treat as gods, but they are really nothing, their existence imposes on them no moral obligation. There is One, however, and only One, from your relation to whom there grows up all moral obligations. "*One God.*" Monotheism is demonstrated by all nature, by all consciences, as well as by the Bible. (1) He is a Father. "*The Father of whom.*" The Creator of the universe, but the Father of spirits, spirits are His offspring. (2) He is the Source of all things. "*Of whom are all things.*" The mighty universe and all it contains are but streams from Him, the Fountain of life. (3) He is our end. "*We in Him,*" or "*unto Him,*" more properly. The supreme end of our existence, and object of our love. In connection with Him there is another, "*One Lord Jesus Christ.*" This one Lord Jesus Christ was not only His creative agent, "*by whom are all things,*" but His redemptive Agent, the Mediator between God and men. "*And we by Him,*" or "*through Him.*" As Christians we are what we are through Him. Now the will of this One God, as coming through Christ to us, we are morally bound to fulfil. An obligation this which not only can never be abrogated but never modified by any circumstances, or any age, or any revolution. The verses suggest—

II. THAT WHAT MIGHT BE WRONG FOR ONE MAN TO DO MIGHT NOT BE SO FOR ANOTHER. The Apostle teaches that those in the Corinthian Church who had reached the conviction that an idol was nothing in the world, and that consequently there was no harm to them personally in eating of the sacrifices that were offered to idols, would commit no wrong in doing so. The meat itself had not been corrupted because it had been

offered to idols, it was as good as any other meat, and as their consciences were not against it there would be no wrong in them participating in it as food. On the other hand, those who had a superstitious idea that they ought not to touch the meat they saw the priests feeding upon in heathen temples, would commit wrong in using it as food. "*Meat commendeth us not to God, for neither if we eat are we the better, neither if we eat not are we the worse.*" The right or the wrong depended on each man's conscience. That which is against a man's conscience may not be against the eternal law of right, but is against his own sense of right, and therefore should be avoided, and that which is in accord with a man's conscience, though it may not be in accord with the principles of absolute rectitude, would not be wrong to him. Though sincerity may not always be an absolute virtue, it is always relatively binding, and though insincerity may not always be an absolute wrong, it is always a relative crime. Thus what is relatively wrong to one man, is not to another. To one man an acceptance of the dogmas, an adoption of the rites of his religion, whether Papist or Protestant, may be to him right because he believes in them, whereas another man who lacks faith in the creeds will commit a wrong against his own conscience in being connected with a Church where such doctrines are propounded, and such rites are celebrated. Here is the principle, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Therefore, "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." The verses suggest—

III. THAT TO OFFEND THE CONSCIENCE OF A GOOD MAN, HOWEVER WEAK, IS A WRONG IN ALL. "*Take heed, lest by*

any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak." Respect for the weak consciences of good men, First: May require self-denial on our part. A truly enlightened and healthy-minded Christian may feel at perfect liberty to do that from which a weak-minded disciple would recoil with horror. The apostle, for example, might have felt at perfect liberty to sit down in the very temple of idols and feast on meat that had been offered to idols; his great soul had risen up out of the letter and form of religion, and exulted in that "liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free." Meats and drinks and ceremonies and statutory laws, and therefore any restriction in such matters will involve more or less self-denial, and this Paul willingly accepted, rather than "*offend*" a "*weak brother.*" On this principle it becomes all to act. Men who have reached the higher stages of Christly life may feel at liberty to do many things; things, too, which they would enjoy, such as visits to the theatre, to witness the dramatic representation of great characters and principles, treating the first day of the week as all other days, disregarding religious formulæ and attendance on public worship; but since they are surrounded by good people whose consciences are in the strongest antagonism to all such things, it is their duty to deny themselves of such liberty, and, it may be, conveniences and enjoyments. Respect for the weak consciences of good men, Secondly: Is urged on the strongest considerations. (1) The lack of it may inflict serious injuries on the weak. (a) It may "*become a stumbling block to them that are weak.*" This means, I presume, an occasion of sin. Their faith may be shaken, and they may become apostates; and, more,

(b) They may be "*emboldened*," encouraged to do the wrong. Without your moral strength they will imitate you and will be ruined. (c) It may ruin them. "*And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died.*" Christ died for all, tasted death for every man, yet His death does not necessarily insure the salvation of any. What a solemn thought, that the conduct even of an advanced Christian may lead to the spiritual ruin of others! (2) The lack of it is a sin both against the weak brethren and against Christ. "*When ye sin so against the brethren and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.*" Respect for the weak consciences of good men, Thirdly: Is exemplified in the sublime resolve of the apostle. "*If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.*" Here is benevolent expediency, the strongest ground on which the temperance reformation can be wisely and effectively advocated. In this sublime utterance you have the self-sacrificing and magnanimous spirit of the Gospel. Give up all rather than ruin souls. Such an utterance as this is characteristic of Paul. "But I could wish that I myself were accursed for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

CONCLUSION.—Where, in the State or in the Church, can you find a man who approaches in spirit the sublime philanthropy of Paul? In the State we have men who call themselves reformers, who grow eloquent in proclaiming the rights of man and the glories of liberty, but can you find either in their speeches or deeds the matchless spirit of philanthropy, beaming and booming in these words of the apostle, "*Wherefore if meat make*

my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth ? ” But our reformers are, alas, more or less traders and hirelings. Aye, where in your Churches do you find preachers aglow with this unconquerable love for man? And yet this is Christianity, this is what the world wants, what it must have ere it can be morally redeemed. “There never did,” says *Sir Walter Scott*, “and never will exist anything permanently noble and excellent in a character which was a stranger to the exercise of resolute self-denial. Teach self-denial, and make its practice pleasurable, and you create for the world a destiny more sublime than ever issued from the brain of the wildest dreamer.”

GRACE AND GIFTS.

“FOLLOW AFTER CHARITY,” &c.—1 Cor. xiv. 1-33.

THERE are many separate verses in this paragraph implying or suggesting thoughts capable of being wrought out into sermonic sketches, but my purpose now is to take a homiletical glance at the whole. The following general propositions will bring all the parts into a logical connection.

I. THE GRACE OF CHARITY IS SUPERIOR TO ALL ENDOWMENTS. I say “*charity*,” for I prefer the word to the word love, which the New Version gives as the substitute. Charity implies the highest forms of love, compassion, sympathy, benevolence. “*Follow after charity and desire spiritual gifts.*” Whatever other

endowments you may possess or desire, do not neglect the cultivation of charity. The remarks of the illustrious F. W. Robertson are so admirable on this point that I transcribe them here. In showing the difference between a grace and a gift, he says, "A grace does not differ from a gift in this, that the former is from God, and the latter from nature. As a creative power there is no such thing as nature, all is God's. A grace is that which has in it some moral quality, whereas a gift does not necessarily share in this. Charity implies a certain character, but a gift, as for instance that of tongues, does not. A man may be fluent, learned, skilful, and be a good man; likewise, another may have the same powers, and yet be a bad man—proud, mean, or obstinate. Now this distinction explains at once why graces are preferable. Graces are what the man *is*; but enumerate his gifts, and you will only know what he *has*. He *is* loving, he *has* eloquence, or medical skill, or legal knowledge, or the gift of acquiring languages, or that of healing. You only have to cut out his tongue, or to impair his memory, and the gift is gone. But on the contrary, you must destroy his very being, change him into another man, and obliterate his identity, before he ceases to be a loving man. Therefore, you may contemplate the gift separate from the man, and whilst you admire it, you may despise him. As many a gifted man is contemptible through being a slave to low vices, or to his own high gifts. But you cannot contemplate the grace separate from the man—he is loveable or admirable, according as he has charity, faith, or self-control. And hence the apostle bids the Corinthians undervalue gifts in comparison with

graces. "Follow after charity." But as to gifts they are not ourselves, but our accidents, like property, ancestors, birth, or position in the world. But hence, also, on the other hand, arises the reason of our due admiration of gifts, "*desire spiritual gifts.*" Many religious persons go into the contrary extreme: they call gifts dangerous, ignore them, sneer at them, and say they are of the world. No, says the apostle, "*desire*" them, look them in the face as goods: not the highest goods, but still desirable, like wealth or health. Only remember you are not wealthy or good because of them. And remember other people are not bound to honour you for them. Admire a Napoleon's genius, do not despise it, but do not let your admiration of that induce you to give honour to the man. Let there be no mere hero-worship, that false modern spirit which recognises the force that is in a man as the only thing worthy of homage. The subject of this chapter is—not the principle on which graces are preferable as gifts, but the principle on which one gift is preferable to another, "*Rather that ye may prophecy.*" Now the principle of this preference is very briefly stated. Of gifts, Paul prefers those which are useful to those that are showy. The gift of prophecy was useful to others, whilst that of tongues was only a luxury for self. The principle of this preference is stated generally in the twelfth verse, "*Even so ye, forasmuch as ye were zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church.*"

II. SOME ENDOWMENTS ARE SUPERIOR TO OTHERS. In the fifth verse the apostle says, "*Greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues.*" In

this chapter it is taught that the *didactic* faculty is greater than the *linguistic*. Sense is better than sound, ideas are better than words. Ideas are the seed of character and the soul of history. Of all classes of ideas, religious ideas, ideas in relation to God, are the most salutary and sublime. A man may pronounce "sun," "universe," "God," in fifty different languages, and he is not necessarily richer in ideas concerning these than the man who can only speak them in his own vernacular. It often happens that the man who has the most aptitude in acquiring languages, and the most fluency in pronouncing them, has the least capacity either for attaining or communicating great ideas. But the language of which the apostle is here speaking, seems to have been of a very peculiar sort, an unintelligible vocal utterance. It was perhaps the inarticulate voice of new and strong emotions, an emotional language. It is not *necessary* to consider this gift as miraculous. We are so constituted that when there rises up in our souls a strong rush of tender emotions, we feel utterly incapable to put them into words. Sometimes they choke us. If expressed at all, they can only be in the quivering lip, and the gleaming eye, and the convulsive chest. No stranger or stronger emotions can enter a man's soul than those which Christianity awakens when it first takes possession of him. The groans, the sighs, the rapturous shouts, cannot be interpreted. Albeit they are a "*gift*," a gift of a high type, inasmuch as they are the expression of the most priceless states of soul. Such have been manifested in all great revivals of religion. In my younger days I have heard such untranslatable sounds under the mighty sermons of grand old Welsh preachers. The

words imply that these "*tongues*," unintelligible vocal sounds, are valuable. "*I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied.*" They are valuable, (1) Because they are symptomatic of a new spiritual life. You can talk about the facts of history, the principles of science, and the doctrines of theology, but not about the deepest and divinest things of the heart. They only come out in "groanings that cannot be uttered." They are valuable, (2) Because in them the soul expresses its devotions. "*If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.*" It is delightful to think of the human soul generally so immersed in the selfish and the sensuous, bathing itself in the rising tides of spiritual emotions. They are valuable, (3) Because by them the religious sympathy of the unbelieving is often excited. "*Wherefore tongues are for a sign not to them that believe, but to them that believe not.*" Sound expressive of human emotion often strikes potently on the heart of the listener. The emotions of others revealed either in sounds or "*signs*," groans, sighs, or tears, seldom fail to strike the deepest chords in the hearts of others. Take the most thoughtless man into some vast congregation in Wales, when all the people are singing their plaintive hymns in strains of wierd music, and he will not be long, even if he understands not the language, before he feels the influence. Deep emotion often speaks in the "*unknown tongue*." Unsyllabled speech is often the mightiest. There are melodies that carry into the soul that which no word can express.

III. The highest endowment is the ABILITY FOR SPIRITUAL TEACHING.

(*To be continued.*)

Germes of Thought.

THE PREACHER'S FINGER-POST.

Paul's Uninspired Conception of Marriage.

"NOW CONCERNING THE THINGS WHEREOF YE WROTE UNTO ME," &c.—1 Cor. vii. 1-14. Also from verse 25 to 28 : also from verse 32 to 40.

ALL that Paul here says of marriage is in answer to some communication which the Church had addressed to him on the subject, and what he says he declares is not "*of commandment*," that is, not by Divine authority, but by "*permission*." All Scripture is therefore not inspired, even all the wise counsels of St. Paul do not seem to have been inspired. So desirous did he seem to be that all he says on this subject should be regarded as coming from himself without any inspiration of God, that he declares it not only in the sixth verse but also in the twenty-fifth verse, in which he says, "*I have no commandment of the Lord*." My purpose now

is to gather up from all these verses Paul's personal ideas of marriage. His idea seems to be—

I. That marriage is not a DUTY BINDING ON MANKIND. It is not a moral obligation like, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," &c. He says, "*It is good for a man not to touch a woman*" (ver. 1), again, "*I would that all men were even as I myself*" (ver. 7), and again, "*It is good for them if they abide even as I*" (ver. 8). In referring to the widow he says, "*She is happier if she so abide after my judgment, and I think also that I have the spirit of God*" (ver. 40). So Paul seems to teach that the question of marriage is optional, not obligatory.

Some may feel that celibacy is best for them, then let them remain single; others think that marriage is the most desirable state, then let them enter into that relationship. Now it does strike one as something marvellous that this condition of life on which the very continuation of the human race depends, should remain thus open and optional. Suppose that to-day every individual of the human race determined not to enter into this relationship, and to have no intercourse with the opposite sex, sixty years hence, at least, the race would be extinct; no man, woman, or child would be found on the earth. The earth would be as it once was without a man, a school without a student, a theatre without a spectator, a temple without a worshipper. The answer to the question which some may give is this, that there is no reason for a written command, it is a law of nature. God does not command us to eat and drink because it is not necessary, the law of

our nature urges us to it. For the same reason He does not command us to marry. However, so it is, and it is a wonderful thought that upon the volition of this generation on this question, depends the continuation or non-continuation of the race. Paul's idea seems to be—

II. That marriage is PRIMARILY FOR SPIRITUAL ENDS. "*The unbelieving husband is sanctified,*" &c. (ver. 14). The view given of the end of marriage in the marriage service, viz., the procreation of children, is evidently not the idea that Paul had, and it is a somewhat degrading idea. Paul's idea throughout seems to be that the grand purpose of marriage is mutual spiritual influence. correcting faults, removing unbelief, establishing faith, serving the Lord. Those who enter on this relationship from fleshly impulses and with fleshly ends, misunderstand the ordinance, and are never truly married. There is not only no union of soul but an inner division. True marriage means such a mutual spiritual affection

as welds two souls into one moral personality. Paul's idea seems to be—

III. That marriage INVOLVES MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS THE MOST SACRED. First:

Mutual benevolence. "*Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence, and likewise also the wife to the husband.*" Benevolence, a

heartly well-wishing, each wishing the well-being of the other. The New Version drops the word

"benevolence." Secondly: Mutual identification.

"*The wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband, and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.*" The

both are one. The equal rights of wife and husband are everywhere recognised in the Bible.

Thirdly: Mutual honesty.

"*Defraud ye not one the other.*" Deception is inimical to the true union

of souls. Nothing cuts united hearts asunder so easily and effectively as

artfulness and deception.

Fourthly:—Mutual forbearance. "*If any brother have a wife that believeth*

not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him" (ver. 12, 13).

Should difference of opinion on religious subjects crop up, should the faith of one or the other in religious matters be shaken or wane, forbear, do not separate on that account, for the right may correct the wrong, the believing correct the unbelieving. Fifthly: Mutual concession of personal freedom. "*But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God hath called us to peace.*" (ver. 15). If the wife feels it in her conscience to be a duty to leave her husband, he should not coerce her, nor should she employ compulsion, should he feel it his duty to withdraw.

CONCLUSION.—Such are roughly and briefly some of Paul's personal opinions on the question of marriage. They seem

to be on the whole wise and just. We have made marriage a civil contract, and we bind two persons together for life who never possessed those mutual affinities which are the essence of marriage. The essence of marriage is this, the strongest mutual sympathies and aims that

one being can have for another; the bond of marriage is this the solemn mutual pledge. Those who are thus married are united by a cord stronger than adamant, finer than the finest web, too weak to fetter yet too strong to break.*

Christianity in Relation to the Body.

"ALL THINGS ARE LAWFUL UNTO ME, BUT ALL THINGS ARE NOT EXPEDIENT," &c.—1 Cor. vi. 12-20.

It would seem that there were those in the Church at Corinth who regarded Christianity as giving them a kind of liberty to do whatsoever they wished. Some of them having left Judaism with its various restraints, and others paganism which also had restrictions. They were too ready to push the doctrine of religious liberty, as proclaimed by Paul, far beyond its limits. The Apostle here states, perhaps in answer to a question on the subject, that there is a limitation to Christian liberty. He

says: "*All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient.*" As the liberty which they seemed to covet was a liberty in relation to the gratifications of bodily appetites, he takes occasion to state certain things in relation to the body, and his remarks suggest to us the *relation of Christianity to the human body*. We observe—

I. That it recognises attention to the NATURAL NEEDS OF THE BODY AS PROPER. "*Meats for the belly, and the belly for*

* See "Germs of the Gospel on Matthew xix. 1-12."

meats." This means the body has appetites and there are provisions intended and fitted to satisfy them. Christianity allows man to partake of those provisions in nature necessary to satisfy and strengthen his physical nature. To act thus is to act in harmony with the constitution of nature. All animal existences act in this way. Christianity, instead of requiring you to starve the body by fastings, and to exhaust its energies by painful pilgrimages and self-mortifications, says, "Eat and be satisfied, eat and be strong, take care of your bodies." If you choose to eat the meat offered to idols, to allay your appetites and to invigorate your frames, well eat it. Feeding the body, however, Christianity regards though proper, as very temporary, both the food and the body must perish. They are not like spiritual existences, and spiritual supplies that have regard to an unmeasured hereafter. Not so with the

body, "All flesh is grass." We observe—

II. That it recognises INDULGENCE IN THE GRATIFICATIONS OF THE BODY AS WRONG. "*Now the body is not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.*" This is not a necessity of the body, like eating and drinking, but an immoral indulgence of its propensities. Man should attend to his bodily propensities, as *reliefs*, not as gratifications. He who attends to his physical propensities in order to get pleasure out of them, sinks lower than a brute, violates the laws of his nature, degrades his being, and offends his God. Hence intemperance, whether in eating or drinking is a moral outrage. The crime and curse of men in all ages have been seeking happiness out of the gastric, the sexual, and other propensities of their physical being. We observe—

III. That it recognises that the PROPER TREATMENT OF THE BODY IS TO IDENTIFY IT WITH CHRIST. First: It

is a *property* of Christ. It is "*for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.*" It is not ours, we are its trustees, not its proprietors; we hold it "*for the Lord,*" and we should use it according to His directions. It is His will that it should be used by the soul to convey from the external universe quickening and hallowing impressions of the Divine, and used to express and develope the holy thoughts and purposes which such impressions should produce. It is to let in God to the soul, and to reveal God to our race. Secondly: It is a *member* of Christ. "*Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?*" If we are genuine Christians, He regards even our bodies as having a vital connection with Him. He had a human body, and that human body raised to heaven is the model into which our bodies shall be changed. This being so, the prostitution of the body to sensual indulgence of any kind is an incongruity and an out-

rage. "*Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot, is one body, for two saith he shall be one flesh. But he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit,*" &c. Thirdly: It is a *temple* of Christ. "*What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you which ye have of God?*" Christ by His Spirit claims the body as a temple in which He is to dwell, be revealed, and worshipped. It is His property, "*Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*" The language here is of course figurative. It does not mean that there was a strictly commercial transaction in the redemption of man, a literal *quid pro quo*, for the thing spoken of pertains to spiritual interests and relations, and not to commerce.

The Man and the Woman.

"BUT I WOULD HAVE YOU KNOW," &c.—1 Cor. xi. 3-15.

ALTHOUGH there are some things in these verses that perhaps no one can rightly interpret, and that may have been written as personal judgment rather than as Divine inspiration, there are two or three points in relation to man and woman interesting and noteworthy.

I. There is between them a SUBORDINATION IN NATURAL RELATIONSHIP.

"*But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.*" The principle of subordination, it would seem, prevails throughout the spiritual universe; one rising above another in regular gradation up to God Himself. God is over Christ, Christ is over man, man is over woman. "*For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man.*" The ideal women

and the ideal men are here, I presume, meant. It is because the man is supposed to have more brain and being than the woman that he is the master; but in cases—and they are not few—where the woman is the greater—the greater in intellect, heart, and all moral nobleness, she, without her intention or even wish, would necessarily be the head. In the marriage service, the woman at the altar is called upon solemnly to vow to obey her husband. I confess I have often been struck at the incongruity of this, when I have seen a little-chested, small-brained man standing by the side of a woman with a majestic brow, and a grand physique, who is called upon to vow obedience to such a man. We are taught here that—

II. There is between them an INDEPENDENT OBLIGATION IN RELIGIOUS SERVICES. "*Every man*

praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head," &c. It is here implied that both the man and the woman are to prophesy, teach, and pray; not one instead of the other, but each independently. However closely related the man and the wife may be, however dependent one is on the other, neither can perform the spiritual and religious obligations of the other. There is no sharing of duty here, no shirking of obligation, each must stand alone before God. We are taught here that—

III. There is a DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM IN OUTWARD ASPECT. There are two points here concerning the difference. First: A difference in the way in which they are to appear in public. The man is to appear with an uncovered head, the woman with a covered head. *"If the woman be not covered, let her also be*

shorn, but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn, or shaven, let her be covered. For a man, indeed, ought not to cover his head." The woman's head is to be covered with her hair or a veil, or both. Who shall divine the meaning of the tenth verse? *"For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of angels."* To me this is utterly incomprehensive. Secondly: This difference is adventitious rather than natural. Is there any reason in nature why a man's head should be uncovered, and a woman's covered, why one should wear long hair, and the other short? No such meaning seems reasonable; the uncivilised tribes know nothing of it. The reason can only be traced to custom. Paul indeed says, *"Doth not even nature itself teach you that if a man have long hair it is a shame unto him?"* But nature does not seem to teach us that, but custom and conventional propriety. Hence Paul says, *"If*

any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom ;" by which he means, I understand, that whoever may contend to the contrary, such a custom—as that woman

should pray and preach with uncovered heads—was not known by Paul in other Churches, and that the Church at Corinth should not do so.

Religious Institutions—their Abuse.

"NOW IN THIS THAT I DECLARE UNTO YOU I PRAISE YOU NOT," &c.—1 Cor. xi. 17-22.

THREE practical truths may be fairly deduced from this paragraph—

I. That ATTENDANCE ON THE INSTITUTIONS OF RELIGION MAY PROVE PERNICIOUS RATHER THAN BENEFICIAL. "*Now in this*

that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better but for the worse."

The Apostle in this verse censures the Corinthians that they came together to the Lord's Supper, and were made "*worse*" rather than "*better*." Men cannot be made religious, an irresistible moral force is a contradiction in terms, an impossibility in fact. Hence it comes to pass that the highest redemp-

tive forces on man often conduce to his ruin. The Gospel proves in the case of all hearers either the "savour of life unto life, or of death unto death." Pharaoh's heart was hardened under the ministry of Moses, and the hearts of the men of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum were hardened under the ministry of Christ. Another truth here is—

II. That ASSEMBLING TOGETHER FOR RELIGIOUS PURPOSES DOES NOT NECESSARILY IMPLY UNITY OF SOUL. "*For first of all when ye come together in the church I hear that there be divisions among you, and I partly believe it. For there must*

be also heresies among you that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."

The factious and schismatic spirit seems to have existed in the same Church and even at the Lord's Table. It does not follow that because people are brought together in the same religious Assembly or Church, that they are united together in spirit. Two people may sit in the same pew, hear the same discourse, sing the same hymns, partake of the same bread and wine, and yet in soul be as remote from one another as the poles. No real spiritual unity can exist where there is not a supreme affection for the same being. Christ is the

only uniting place of souls. Another truth here is—

III. That THE VERY BEST INSTITUTIONS ON EARTH ARE OFTEN SADLY PERVERTED BY MEN. For many reasons the Lord's Supper may be regarded as one of the best ordinances. But see how it was now perverted. It was made the means of gluttony and drunkenness, men used it as a common feast. "*When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper and one is hungry and another is drunken.*" Are not men constantly perverting divine institutions, Churches, Bibles, the Christian Ministry? * &c.

The Christian Feast.

"THE CUP OF BLESSING WHICH WE BLESS, IS IT NOT THE COMMUNION OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST?" &c.—1 Cor. x. 10, 11.

The text undoubtedly refers to the feast, which Christ instituted the night on which He was

betrayed, and these words lead us to look at that feast in two aspects:—

I. AS A MEDIUM FOR

* For remarks on verses 22 to 26 see "Homilist," vol. xx., page 102.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION. "*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*" The shed blood and broken body of Christ are here regarded, and must ever be regarded, as the effects and expressions of His self-sacrificing love. His "*flesh*" and "*blood*," mean His spiritual life. What was the spirit that animated and controlled Him? Self-sacrificing love. This made Him Christ, marked Him off from all other men that ever lived, the very "*body*" and "*blood*" of His soul. When we are commanded, therefore, to eat His flesh and drink His blood, it means that we are to take His spirit into us, His spirit of self-sacrificing philanthropy. This spirit is, indeed, the only true nutritious and satisfying food of the soul. No man can become morally strong or morally satisfied without this in him. Now, in the true spiritual cele-

bration of this feast, there is a two-fold "*communion*." First: A "*communion*" of the disciples with Christ. They drink in His Spirit, and by a living sympathy are brought into a close and tender fellowship with Him. Christ comes in to them and sups with them, and they with Him. We are always bringing those with whom we have the strongest sympathy into our inmost being. Secondly. A "*communion*" of the disciples with one another. "*For we being many, are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.*" "This verse explains how the breaking of the bread was the significant act, which expressed, sacramentally, the communion of the body of Christ. There is one bread, it is broken in many pieces, and as we all (though each receives only a fragment) partake of the one bread, which, unbroken, consisted of these pieces, we, though many individuals, are one body, even the

body of Christ, with whom, as well as with each other, we have communion in that act." All who have a supreme sympathy for one common object will, by a law of their nature, be brought into communion one with another. All hearts will throb with one great feeling, all thoughts will flow into one common channel. Thus all true Christians are united one with another, as all the planets are united by circling round one centre, and deriving therefrom a common impulse, a common life, and a common order. Look at the feast—

II. AS THE EXCLUSIVE PRIVILEGE OF CHRISTIANS. Paul speaks in these verses of two other feasts. First: The feast of the Jewish priesthood. "*Behold Israel after the flesh.*" The Jewish sacrifice was divided, a portion offered on the altar, and a portion taken and eaten.

Secondly: The feast of the idolatrous heathen. "*What say I, then, that the idol is anything, and that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything,*" &c. The heathens had their feast, they partook of that which they offered to their gods. But the spirit manifested in the partakers of both of these feasts—Jewish or heathen—would exclude from the feast which Christ ordained. In the one, there was only a formal respect for Jehovah, and in the other, demons and evil spirits. "*But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: And I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.*" None are to be admitted to Christ's feasts who are not in vital sympathy with Him. "*Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils.*"

Gospel Casuistry.

"ALL THINGS ARE LAWFUL FOR ME, BUT ALL THINGS ARE NOT EXPEDIENT," &c.—1 Cor. x. 23-33.

These verses teach us the following lessons—

I. A GOOD MAN MAY HAVE A RIGHT TO DO THAT WHICH MAY NOT ALWAYS BE EXPEDIENT FOR OTHERS. "*All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.*" What has not a good man a right to? He has a right to go wherever he pleases, to eat whatever he pleases, to dress as he pleases, for a good man will be actuated evermore from a good motive. But for him to use his full right, would manifestly be often inexpedient and even pernicious to others. "*Things lawful*" for him, would not always be things that would "*edify,*" build up souls in reverent faith and true worship. Therefore, it is not always right to stand upon our rights, it is right to conciliate and yield for the sake of others. Another lesson taught is:—

II. SMALL SCRUPLES ON MINOR MATTERS SHOULD NOT BE ENCOURAGED. First: If you are over scrupulous about what you eat, it will interfere with your participation in the provisions which nature has made for you. "*Whatsoever is sold in the shambles that eat asking no question for conscience's sake.*" Some of the meat which had been used for sacrificial purposes in heathen temples was afterwards exposed in the markets for sale. If it is good meat it is not the worst for human food because used in sacrifice. Your nature is exhausted, it requires replenishment; you are hungry, there is the food hung up for sale, buy it, do not let superstitious feelings interfere with the claims of nature. How wretched and wretched some of our co-religionists look through the weeks of Lent, because their scruples keep them from food. Secondly: If you are over scrupulous about

the beliefs of men, you will be deprived of social enjoyments. "*If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go, whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience's sake.*" Free, genial, hearty, social intercourse is one of the greatest blessings of this life. Our Saviour came "eating and drinking," but if you are over scrupulous about the credenda of your host and his provisions, you sacrifice all this and injure your nature. Remember always that the world was given for your enjoyment. "*The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.*" "All things are yours." Another lesson taught is—

III. A DEFERENCE TO THE CONSCIENCES OF OTHERS SHOULD NEVER BE NEGLECTED. "*If any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not, for his sake that showed it, and for conscience's sake,*" &c. When at the table with meats spread before you which have been sacrificed to idols, and a fellow-

guest conscientiously abstains from touching it, and he reminds you of the fact, then out of deference to his weak conscience do not touch it. However delicious it may appear, however fragrant its aroma, however hungry you may be, out of regard to that weak brother's conscience deny yourself. The most sacred thing under these heavens is the conscience. The weakest conscience should be respected, to wound the conscience is to wound the man. What are meats and drinks to a human conscience? Another lesson taught here is—

IV. SUPREME REGARD FOR THE GLORY OF GOD SHOULD RULE US IN ALL. "*Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*" "These words embrace all life. The definite acts of eating and drinking are mentioned expressly, as they are the subject immediately under consideration. They are, however, to be regulated by the same principle which guides all

true life. The modern idea of some acts being religious, and some secular, is neither here or elsewhere recognised by St. Paul: No act of life is in itself, either religious or secular. The quality of each act depends on the spirit which guides it and the motives from which it springs. The commonest thing may be done in a high Christian spirit, the greatest deed may spring from a low and selfish motive. A religious act done in a secular spirit is secular. A secular thing done in a religious spirit is

religious. This is the first great principle of Christian life." The other lesson taught here is—

V. That THE GOOD OF OTHERS, AND NOT THE GRATIFICATION OF SELF, SHOULD BE OUR CONSTANT AIM.

"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth. "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God, even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many that they may be saved."

Unselfish Immortality.

"THE enduring element in all the works and thoughts of bygone men is that which they have done and said with truth and simplicity, that is, in harmony with the universal nature of men and things. It is not eloquence alone, or subtlety of thought, or flashing fancy, or the philosophy which penetrates nature, but the telling of simple truth about men and their lives, their hearts and their hopes—told with justice and directness with love, and pity, and tenderness, and with the insight and power that these give—that endure while the world lasts, and live and move in men. There is nothing men like so well as to hear about themselves, but the things they hear must be true and simple. If you wish your thoughts and work to live when you are dead, repress the merely fantastic in you; leave subtleties of thoughts and action aside; love what is simple and loving, true and direct; act, and speak, and write naturally in obedience to truth of feeling and justice of thought. Above all, love the common every day feelings and life of men and women. Delight in the simple love, faith, and beauty that each day shows you in the lives of men, and you will endure in human hearts and be loved by them."

STOPFORD BROOK.

Seeds of Sermons on St. Paul's Epistle to Philippians.

Having gone through all the verses in the Epistle to the Ephesians (see "Homilist," Vol. xxii. to xxviii.), we proceed to develop, with our usual brevity, the precious germs of truth contained in this letter. The following remarks, as a standing introduction, may contribute some portion of light to the whole Epistle:—Notice (1) *The residence of the persons addressed.* Philippi—whose ancient name was Crenides—was a city of Macedonia, and called after the name of Philip of Macedon, because he rebuilt and fortified it, B.C. 358, and afterwards colonised by Julius Cæsar, who invested the population with the privilege of a Roman City. It was the first place in Europe where the Gospel was preached by Paul, an account of which we have in the sixteenth chapter of the Acts. It was during his second missionary tour, and about A.D. 53.—Notice (2) *The occasion of the Epistle.* The contributions which the Philippians had made towards supplying the Apostle's necessities when a prisoner at Rome, evidently prompted its production.—Notice (3) *The scene from which the Epistle was addressed.* That it was from Rome where he was a prisoner is clear, from chapters i. 1-13, iv. 22. It would seem from the Epistle that he was expecting a speedy decision of his case, and hoped to obtain his release. Epaphroditus had been despatched to him from the Philippian Church with pecuniary contributions for the Apostle's relief, and on his return the Apostle entrusted this letter for conveyance. This would be about A.D. 63.—Notice (4) *The general character of the Epistle.* It is all but free from any censure, and breathes a warm and generous feeling through every part. The Epistle gives us the impression that the Philippian Church was one of the most pure, consistent, and generous, of that age. About 40 or 50 years after this Epistle was written, we are informed that Ignatius, on his way to martyrdom passed through Philippi, and was most warmly received in that city.]

No. XVI.

The Cost and the Value of Personal Christianity.

"THOUGH I MIGHT ALSO HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH," &c.—
Phil. iii. 4-8.

Notice,—

I. The cost which the Apostle PAID for his Christianity. Metaphorically he sold a property that he at one time valued beyond all price, and that his countrymen regarded as the wealthiest inheritance. Here he gives a summary of the distinguished privileges which belonged to him. First: He refers to his Church status. "*Circumcised the eighth day.*" Therefore not a proselyte, but a Jew. By this rite he became a member

of the great Jewish commonwealth, or, as some call it, the Jewish Church. Secondly: He refers to his illustrious ancestry. "*Of the stock of Israel.*" A true scion of the royal race. "*Of the tribe of Benjamin.*" The tribe from whence came their most distinguished monarchs, and the tribe to whom belonged the holy city. Thirdly: He refers to his religious persuasion. "*An Hebrew of the Hebrews.*" Elsewhere he says, "I truly am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of

Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous before God." (Acts xxii. 3, 4.) A thorough Hebrew. Paul had something to boast of here. In his veins ran the blood which had quivered amid Egyptian plagues and rushed to the hearts of those that heard the voice of Sinai's trumpet. Fourthly: He refers to his zealous devotedness. "*Concerning zeal persecuting the Church.*" He carried out his religious convictions with such zeal that he persecuted all who differed from him. Which is the worse, enthusiasm in a bad cause, or lazy profession in a good one? Fifthly: He refers to his ceremonial righteousness. "*Touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless.*" All the commandments he kept "from his youth up." Such were the privileges that Paul enjoyed, and to him, as well as to his

countrymen, they were beyond all price. Notice—

II. The VALUE which the Apostle ATTACHED to his Christianity. He gave up Judaism with its gorgeous ritual, and mighty memories, and matchless histories, and does this for Christianity. Does he regret the loss, deplore the costly sacrifice? No. "*What things were gain to me those I counted loss for Christ.*" When he practically accepted the religion of Jesus, all that he once gloried in became contemptible. "*Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.*" Christianity is the science of sciences. Three remarks will illustrate the incalculable value of this science. First: It *accords* with all true sciences. Secondly: It *encourages* all true sciences. Thirdly: It *transcends* all true sciences.* Chrysostom says, "When the sun doth appear it is loss to sit by a candle."

No. XVII.

Phases of Christ.

"I HAVE SUFFERED THE LOSS OF ALL THINGS, AND COUNT THEM BUT DUNG, THAT I MAY WIN CHRIST," ETC.—*Phil.* iii. 8-11.

Paul presents Christ in four aspects:—

I. As a PRIZE. "*That I may win Christ.*" What is it to

win Christ? It is something more than to become acquainted with His *biography*, something more than to understand the

* See "Homilist," vol. xxii., page 65.

doctrines He taught or the theory of His life and mission. To gain Him is to gain His moral *spirit*. His moral spirit is Himself—that which marked Him off from all other men that have lived—that is the Christ. “If any man hath not the spirit of Christ he is none of His.” The apostle presents Christ here—

II. As a REST. “*Found in Him.*” For the soul to be found in Christ is to be found in His *character*. We are all living in the characters of others. The unregenerate world lives in the fallen character of Adam. The regenerate world lives in Christ, in the character of Christ. Resting in His character as the branch rests in the trunk of the tree, deriving from it its life, its form, its hue, its fruit. Oh, to live in His character, in His spotless purity, in His immeasurable love, in His matchless excellence. Those who do so will not have their “own righteousness, which is of the law,” &c., but His moral rectitude. The apostle presents Christ here—

III. As a THEME. “*That I may know Him.*” The knowledge here does not mean intellectual knowledge, but heart knowledge, experimental knowledge.

First: *Know Him* by experience personally. Before you can know a person you must have the spirit that animates him. Love alone can interpret love, &c. Secondly: Know by experience *the power of His resurrection*. All the spiritual significance and benefits of His resurrection from the dead. Thirdly: Know by experience His *sufferings*. “*Have fellowship with His sufferings.*” There are three kinds of suffering: those in which Christ could have no fellowship; those which He experienced, and in which men could have no fellowship; and those in which men are bound to have fellowship with Christ. We are commanded to be partakers of some of His sufferings: (1) We should have fellowship with the intense regret which He felt on account of the existence of moral evil. The fact of evil sat as a mountain of agony on the heart of Christ. Sin was a horrible thing to Him, the “abominable thing” which He hated. (2) We should have fellowship with the sorrowful sympathies which He had for the sufferings of men. His tears over Jerusalem, &c. (3) We should have fellowship with those sufferings which He endured on account of the dishonour sin does to

the Infinite Father. The apostle presents Christ here—

IV. As a MODEL. “*Conformable unto His death.*” What does this mean? To die in the manner which He died on the cross? No. But to live and die

in the mood He did, which was self-sacrifice. He died not for Himself, but for others. “He gave Himself a ransom for many.” Self-sacrificing love is the essence of personal Christianity, and nothing else.

Seeds of Sermons

FROM THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS.

Aspects of a Godly Man.

“AND ELISHA SAID UNTO THE KING OF ISRAEL, WHAT HAVE I TO DO WITH THEE?” &c.”—2 Kings iii. 13-27.

Elisha was confessedly a godly man of a high type, and these verses reveal him to us in three aspects:—

I. AS RISING SUPERIOR TO KINGS. When these three Kings, Jehosaphat, the King of Israel, Jehoram, the King of Samaria, and the King of Edom, approached Elisha, was he overawed by their splendour, or was he elated by their visit? No. Here are his sublimely manly words, “*What have I to do with thee?*” First: He rebukes them for their idolatry. “*Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and the prophets of thy mother.*” In your prosperity

you have been serving these false gods, and you have despised me as the servant of the true God. Why come to me now in your distress? Go and try what they can do for you. What courage in this poor lonely man, thus calmly to confront and honestly to rebuke three kings. Ah me, where is this courage now? The loudest professors of our religion in these times will crouch before kings, and address them in terms of fawning flattery. Secondly: He yields to their urgency out of respect to the true religion. “*And Elisha said, As the Lord of hosts liveth,*

before whom I stand, surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehosophat the King of Judah, I would not look towards thee nor see thee." Jehosophat was pre-eminently a godly man (2 Chron. xvii. 5, 6), and that influenced this great Elisha to interpose on their behalf. "Those that honour me I will honour, saith the Lord." A godly man is the only truly independent man on this earth, he can "stand before kings" and not be ashamed, and rebuke princes as well as paupers for their sins. Whither has this spirit fled? We are a nation of sycophants. Heaven send us *men*! The verses present Elisha—

II. AS PREPARING FOR INTERCESSION WITH HEAVEN. What these kings wanted was the interposition of heaven on their behalf, and they here apply to Elisha to obtain this: and after the prophet had acceded to their request, he seeks to put himself in the right moral mood to appeal to heaven, and what does he do? "*But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass when the minstrel played that the hand of the Lord came upon him.*" Probably his mind had been somewhat ruffled by the presence of these kings, especially at the sight of Jehoram, the wicked and idola-

trous king, and before venturing an appeal to heaven he felt the need of a devout calmness. Hence he called for music, and as the devout musician sounded out sweet psalmody on his ear he became soothed and spiritualised in soul. The power of music, especially the music which is the organ of divine ideas, has in every age exerted a soothing and elevating influence on the human soul. By the harp David expelled the evil spirit from the heart of Saul. "Buretti declares music to have the power of so affecting the whole nervous system as to give sensible ease in a large variety of disorders, and in some cases to effect a radical cure: particularly he instances sciatica as capable of being relieved by this agency. Theophrastus is mentioned by Pliny as recommending it for the hip gout; and there are references on record by old Cato and Vano to the same effect. Æsculapius figures in Pindar as healing acute disorders with soothing songs."

"Music exalts each joy, allays each grief,
Expels disease, softens every pain,
Subdues the rage of poison and of plague,
And hence the wise of ancient days adored
One power of physic, melody, and song."

Luther taught that the "spirit of darkness abhorred sweet sounds."* There is a spiritual mood necessary in order to have intercourse with heaven, and this mood it is incumbent on every man to seek and retain. The verses reveal Elisha—

III. AS BECOMING THE ORGAN OF THE SUPERNATURAL. (1) Through him God made a promise of deliverance. "*For thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain,*" &c. (ver. 17-19). (2) Through him God effected their deliverance. "*And when they came to the camp of Israel the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites,*" &c. (ver. 24, 25). Thus the Almighty made this godly man both to *foretell* and *fulfil* His plans. We would remind those who are sceptical of this, and who perhaps ridicule the idea of man becoming the organ of Divine power, First: That there is nothing

antecedently improbable in this. God works through His creatures, since He created the universe He employs it as His agent. What wonders He works through the sun, the atmosphere, &c. Science teaches that even through worms He prepares the soil of this earth to produce food for man and beast.† But inasmuch as man is confessedly greater than the material universe—for he is the offspring of the Infinite, and participates in the Divine nature—it cannot be absurd to regard him in a pre-eminent sense as an organ of the supernatural. Secondly: *Biblical history* attests this. Moses, Christ, and the Apostles performed deeds that seem to us to have transcended the natural. A morally great man becomes "mighty through God." God has ever worked wonders through godly men, and ever will.

A Prophet's Widow and a Prophet's Kindness.

"NOW THERE CRIED A CERTAIN WOMAN OF THE WIVES OF THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS UNTO ELISHA," &c.—2 Kings iv. 1-7.

There are two subjects of thought in these verses—

I. A PROPHET'S WIDOW IN DISTRESS. "Now there cried

a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha saying, thy servant, my husband, is dead, and thou

* See Jacox's "Secular Annotations" on Medicamental Music.

† See Darwin's "Vegetable Mould and Earth Worms."

knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen." This poor woman had not only lost her husband, and was left with a bleeding heart, left lonely and desolate in a cold world, but was left in great poverty. Her husband was not only a good man, one "*who did fear the Lord,*" but a "*prophet,*" a religious teacher, one engaged in disseminating *Divine* ideas amongst men. It seems that he not only died poor, but died in debt. But few ministers who are not Charlatanic pulpiteers, but devout and honest teachers, are able to make provision for their wives and children in case of their death. To-day some of the most enlightened, thoughtful, and really useful ministers are amongst the poorest. Observe, First: That poverty is not necessarily a disgrace. It is sometimes the result of inflexible honesty and moral nobility. Observe, Secondly: That the best lives here are subject to trials. It is reasonable to infer that this widow was a good woman, one who, like her departed husband, "*did fear the Lord,*" and yet see her distress! The afflictions of the good are not penal, but disciplinary. Observe,

Thirdly: That avarice feeds cruelty. "*The creditor is come to take unto him my two sons as bondsmen.*" The debt she owed, which, we may imagine could not have been very large, her heartless creditor insisted on being discharged at once, and demanded her two sons to become slaves to him in order to work out the debt. The avaricious world is heartless; even in this London of ours hundreds are dying on all hands of starvation. Observe, Fourthly: That Churches should make provision for the widows of their minister. The incomes of the best ministers in England to-day are not sufficient to enable them to make provision for their wives and children in case of their death. Churches which have committees for sending out missionaries, for distributing Bibles (which are cheap enough now), and for distributing tracts, which are often calumnies on Christianity, ought certainly to have a committee to provide for the future of their minister's family. Here we have—

II. A PROPHET AT WORK TO RELIEVE A BROTHER'S WIDOW. In her distress instinct tells her where to go, and she goes to Elisha, a man not only who knew her husband, but of kindred experiences and sympa-

thies. To him she "*cried.*" Her appeal was really an unintentional compliment to Elisha. The greatest compliment a man can offer is an opportunity for contributing to a truly deserving object. When one's compeers rank him amongst those whose meanness has become patent, charity ignores him. In her benign mission she marches by him in stately silence, as one whom society has placed in the branded category of sordid souls. See how Elisha helps this widow. First : Promptly. "*Then Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee ? tell me what hast thou in thy house ?*" He did not want arguments or testimonials, &c., but with a beaming generosity he virtually said, Tell to me your condition and I will do my utmost to serve thee. He set to work at once. Having told him she had nothing in her house but one "*pot of oil,*" he says to her, "*Go borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels borrow not a few.*" She obeys his behest, goes amongst her neighbours and borrows all the vessels, and then, according to his directions, she closes the door upon herself, and upon her sons, and begins to pour out into each vessel a part of the little pot of oil which she

had, and as she poured every vessel she had collected became full to the brim. The more she poured the more came, until she lacked vessels to hold it. A symbol this of all benevolent virtues, the more they are used the more they grow. So, indeed, with all the faculties of the soul under the influence of true generosity, right giving is the way to the most precious getting. All this, of course, indicates on Elisha's part supernatural assistance. He helped her, Secondly : Effectively. "*Then she came and told the man of God (Elisha) and he said, Go sell the oil and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.*" Oil was one of the commodities Judea traded in (Ezek. xxvii. 17). She would, therefore, have little difficulty in disposing of this oil, which no doubt was of the best description. The proceeds were to go first to the satisfaction of her heartless creditor, and then to the permanent relief of herself and family.

CONCLUSION. — Matthew Henry's remarks are good: "Let those who are poor and in distress be encouraged to trust God for supply in the way of duty. Verily thou shalt be fed but not feasted. It is true we cannot now expect miracles,

yet we may expect mercies if we wait on God and seek Him. Let widows particularly, and prophet's widows in a special manner, depend upon Him to preserve them and their fatherless children alive, for to them He will be a husband and a father. Let those whom God hath blessed with plenty, use

it for the glory of God and under the direction of His Word; let them do justly with it, as this widow did, and serve God cheerfully in the use of it, and as Elisha, be ready to do good to those that need them, be eyes to the blind and feet to the lame."

Hospitality.

"AND IT FELL ON A DAY THAT ELISHA PASSED TO SHUNEM," &c.—
2 Kings iv. 8-17.

In these verses there are two very interesting subjects, and of a practical character.

I. Hospitality RIGHTFULLY EMPLOYED. The object of the hospitality was Elisha the prophet, and the author of it is called here a "*great woman*."* The account given is very clear and sententious. "*And it fell on a day that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a woman, and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was that as oft as he passed by he turned in thither to eat bread.*" Observe, First: The hospitality was very hearty. "*She constrained him to eat bread.*" She did not give Elisha a mere formal invitation, nor was she urged to it by pleadings on his behalf, either by

himself or others. It was spontaneous and hearty, worthy of "*a great woman*." It was so hearty that Elisha felt authorised, "*as oft as he passed by,*" to enter and "*eat bread.*" On his prophetic mission he would be constantly journeying, and often passing the house, and as often as he did so he felt there was a hearty welcome for him inside, and entered. Observe, Secondly: The hospitality was shown to a poor but a Godly man. The woman "*said unto her husband, Behold now I perceive that this is a holy man of God, which passeth by us continually.*" Conventional hospitality welcomes to its table the respectable only, and the more respectable in a

* See "Homilist," Vol. xxxviii., p. 289.

worldly sense the more welcome. But genuine hospitality, as in the case before us, looks out for the poor and deserving, and constrains them to enter and be fed. "When thou makest a feast call not thy kinsmen, nor thy brethren, nor thy rich neighbours, lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind." Observe, Thirdly: The hospitality involved considerable trouble and expense. This "*great woman*" said to her husband, "*Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall: and let us set for him there a bed and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick.*" She did not say to her husband, "entertaining him will put us to no inconvenience or expense, therefore let us invite him." No, she calculated upon some inconvenience and cost, a little chamber would have to be built, quiet and suitable for a man of spiritual thoughtfulness and devotion. And then some furniture, too, would have to be procured, "*a bed, a table, and a stool and a candlestick.*" The hospitality that involves no outlay is common, but is a counterfeit, nay a misnomer. The accommodation this woman offered to Elisha, it must be

borne in mind, included that of his servant Gehazi, he shared the provisions and the apartments of his master. The other subject here is:—

II. Hospitality NOBLY REWARDED. Elisha, instead of being insensible to the great generosity of his hostess, glowed with gratitude that prompted a strong desire to make some return and "*said unto Gehazi his servant, call this Shunamite. And he said unto him, say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care, what is to be done for thee?*" His offer, First: Implies his consciousness of great power with man. "*Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king or to the captain of the host?*" Though poor himself, he had influence with the rich; and though too independent in soul to ask of them a favour for himself, he could do it for others. Her answer to his generous offer is expressive of the calm self-respect, unmercenaryness and dignity of a "*great woman.*" She answered, "*Idwell among mine own people.*" As if she had said, We are provided for, we neither aim at, or need preferment. Elisha's offer, Secondly: Implies his consciousness of his power with God. He finds out through his servant Gehazi that the one great thing on

earth that they desired most, and would most appreciate, was a family ; a child would brighten their hearth and gladden their hearts. This, through his wonderful power with heaven, Elisha obtains for them. Thus the Almighty Himself acknowledged the hospitality this woman had shown to His faithful prophet. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

CONCLUSION.—Dinings out and social banquets are common enough amongst us, but hospitality of the true sort is, I trow, somewhat rare : the hospitality described by Washington Irving which "breaks through the chill of ceremonies, and throws every heart into a glow." There is an emanation from the heart in genuine hospitality that cannot be described.

Great Trials.

"AND WHEN THE CHILD WAS GROWN," ETC.—2 Kings iv. 18-32.

This paragraph suggests three general observations :—

I. That great trials OFTEN SPRING FROM GREAT MERCIES. With what rapture we may suppose did this woman welcome her only child into the world, and with what care and affection she would minister to his health and enjoyments. It was her greatest earthly prize. She would sooner have parted with all her property, and even perhaps with her husband, for he was an old man, than lose this dear boy of hers. Yet she does, death snatches him from her embrace. "*And when the child was grown, it fell on a day that he went out to his*

father to the reapers. And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother. And when he had taken him and brought him to his mother he sat on her knees till noon and then died." Though the boy was dead, the woman did not seem to lose hope ; her maternal love would not allow her to realise the terrible fact at once. She first lays him on the bed in the chamber which she had built for the prophet, then she calls to her husband and entreats him to send a servant for one of the asses, that she might flee with swiftness to Elisha. When her husband suggested some

difficulty about her going just at that time, she replied, "*It shall be well.*" "*Then she saddled an ass and said to her servant, Drive and go forward, slack not thy riding for me except I bid thee. So she went and came to the man of God to Mount Carmel.*" This was a journey of about five or six hours. Distance is nothing when the traveller's heart overflows with emotion. How frequently it happens that from our greatest blessings our greatest trials spring. (1)

Friendship is a great blessing. One true friend whose soul lives in ours and ours in him or her, is of priceless worth. Yet the disruption of that friendship may strike a wound on the heart that no time can heal.

(2) A *sanguinary temperament* is a great blessing. It drinks in most of the beauties of nature, it paints the future with the brightest hopes, and stimulates the energies to the greatest enterprises. All the best productions of the human species have sprung from such temperaments. But what trials it brings, in frustrated plans, blighted purposes, and extinguished hopes. But life abounds with illustrations of the fact, the greater the blessings we enjoy the greater agony felt in their loss. The paragraph suggests—

II.—That great trials should be ACQUIESCINGLY ENDURED. In this great trial this woman seemed wonderfully resigned. In reply to a difficulty, which her husband suggested in setting out for the journey—she said, "*It shall be well.*" And when Gehazi the servant of Elisha on her approach to the prophet asked her, "*Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?*" She answered "*It is well.*" Though I left my dear boy a corpse at home, and my heart bleeds, I feel it is all "*well,*" it is the dispensation of a Father all-wise and all-loving, I bow to His will. A state of mind so magnanimous as this under great trial is the duty of all, and the sublime privilege of the holy and the good. Thus Job felt, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." Thus our great Example felt when overwhelmed with immeasurable distress He said, "Not my will but Thine be done."

"Thy way not mine, O Lord,

However dark it be,

Lead me by Thine own hand

Choose out the path for me.

Smooth let it be or rough,

It will be still the best,

Winding or straight it matters not

It leads me to Thy rest."

The paragraph suggests:—

III.—That great trials MIGHT

HAVE A BLESSED END. The end of this woman's great trial was the restoration of her dead child to life. This was brought about, First: In connection with her own earnest efforts. If she had remained at home, and not sped her way to the prophet at Carmel, her boy in all probability would, it would seem, have remained a corpse, and would have had to be buried for ever out of her sight. When she reached him see how earnestly she pleads: "*And when she came to the man of God to the hill she caught him by the*

feet," &c. (ver. 27-28). This was brought about, Secondly: By the power of God through Elisha. In the following verses we have a representation of the way in which this was brought about. God helps man by man. All our trials might have a blessed end. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Yes, whilst "we look not at the things that are seen," the result under God depends on ourselves.

A Church-Extension Enterprise.

"AND THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS SAID UNTO ELISHA, BEHOLD NOW, THE PLACE WHEREIN WE DWELL WITH THEE IS TOO STRAIT FOR US," &c.—2 Kings vi. 1-6.

(Read the whole paragraph).

IF there were a church in Israel at all, the school of the prophets undoubtedly constituted a part of that church. They were a communion of godly men. The brief narrative, therefore, may fairly be regarded as a record of a church-extension enterprise, and as such four things are observable—things that all who contemplate such enterprises, should ponder and imitate:—

I. This Church-extension enterprise was STIMULATED BY THE PRINCIPLE OF GROWTH. The old sphere had become too narrow for them, they had outgrown it. "And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us." The numbers who came to listen to Elisha and the increase of students required greater ac-

commodation than the whole place could afford. This is a principle on which all church-extension we think should proceed, but in these modern times it is not only ignored, but outraged, although statistics show that the churches and chapels in England fall miserably short of the accommodation necessary for the whole population, it is three times greater than is required for the number of attendants. With but few exceptions, empty churches and chapels abound, millions of property contributed for religious purposes lie as the "one talent," wrapped in a napkin unused. And yet, forsooth, every religious denomination seems to feel that the building of new churches is the grand mission. The fact is church building has become a business speculation. One church should grow out of another; the grain of mustard seed will create its own organism, multiply its own branches, and propagate its vitality.

II. This church-extension enterprise was CONDUCTED IN A MANLY MANNER. (1) The best counsel was sought before a step was taken. These sons of the prophets went to Elisha and said, "Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan." Though

they were young, perhaps with all the stirring impulses of youthhood, they were conscious of their need of counsel, and they seek it. In these modern times in England, we speak from extensive experience, chapels are often built from ignorant zeal and a spirit of rivalry, and often religious spite. How unmanly this!

(2) Each man set to honest work in the matter. "Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence *every man a beam, and let us make a place where we dwell.*" Matthew Henry quaintly says, "When they wanted room they did not speak of sending for cedars, and marble stones, and curious artificers, but only of getting every man a beam, to run up a plain hut or cottage with." Each man, it would seem, felled his beam, carried and adjusted it. How right manly and honest all this. They never thought of putting up a grand place at other people's expense. Ah, me, how far we are fallen in spirit from them. To erect modern churches and chapels, what have you? Fawning entreaties, and snivelling pietisms, addressed to moneyed ignorance and stupidity, bazaars with their commercial swindlings, their gambling raffles, and their chasteless flirtations.

III. This church-extension enterprise ENCOUNTERED DIFFICULTIES UNEXPECTED. "And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood. But as one was felling a beam; the axe head fell into the water; and he cried and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed." Why this distress of the woodman? Was it because the axe was borrowed and he had not the wherewith to pay, or because he was checked in his operation? Perhaps both were evidences of his distress. The former I trow the greater. In all worthy enterprises on this earth difficulties crop up unawares. Perhaps the best enterprises encounter the greatest difficulties. "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." But difficulties are in truth blessings in disguise. They challenge the courage, and rouse the forces of the worker. They bring out his manhood. They are to the true worker what tempests are to young trees, they deepen the roots and strengthen fibres. Besides, there is no consciousness of virtue

in doing that which involves no struggle.

IV. This church-extension enterprise OBTAINED SUPERNATURAL HELP WHEN NEEDED. When the man who had lost his axe and was crying out in distress, Elisha, the "Man of God" said, where fell it? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither, and the iron did swim. Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it." Elisha here by raising the axe and making the iron swim, overcame a law of nature—the law of gravitation. Up to this point in this enterprise there did not seem to be any supernatural interposition. They prosecuted their journeying, they cut down the timber, they carried their beams all by their own natural skill and force. They did not require supernatural aid. But now one of them did, and it came. We must not expect any special power from heaven to do that which we have the natural force to accomplish ourselves. "As thy days, so thy strength shall be."

The King of Syria and Elisha.

"THEN THE KING OF SYRIA WARRED AGAINST ISRAEL," &c.—
2 *Kings* 8-23.

In these fifteen verses we have four subjects worth looking into—wickedness thwarted, timidity dispelled, supernaturalness manifested, and revenge overcome.

I. WICKEDNESS THWARTED. The King of Syria had determined on an enterprise of stupendous wickedness. He had made all arrangements, fixed on the place for his camp. "In such a place shall be my camp." But Elisha thwarted the bloody purpose of the Syrian king by informing the Israelitish monarch Joab of the very place where the Syrians had determined to encamp. His words are, "Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down." The king attended to the prophet's directions, and "saved himself there not once nor twice." Terrible was the disappointment of the Syrian monarch. "He was more troubled for this thing; and he called his servants and said unto them, Will ye not show me which of us is for the King of Israel? And one of his servants said, None my lord, O king; but

Elisha the prophet that is in Israel telleth the King of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber." Observe: (1) That wicked men are most secretive in their purposes. It would seem that the plan of the King of Syria's bloody enterprise was only known to his most confidential officers, and that they were confined to his bedchamber. There, and perhaps there only, did he detain them, and perhaps with closed doors and soft whisperings. Wicked men, in order to get on in the world, are bound to be secretive. And the more wicked, the more necessary for them this secretiveness. Were dishonest doctors, lawyers, tradesmen, merchants, statesmen, to be open and candid, revealing all that is nefarious in their aims, they would fall into poverty and universal contempt. The good alone can afford to be open and bland, the wicked are bound to be hypocrites if they would live. (2) That none of their purposes are so secret as to escape the notice of Almighty God. "Elisha the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the

King of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bed-chamber." How came Elisha to know it? He was far away from the monarch's bed-chamber—away in Israel. It was Elisha's God who made the communication to him. Solemn thought. There is one who knoweth what is in man—in every man. He reads all secrets, He "understandeth our thoughts afar off." (3) The revelations of a wicked man's secrets will frustrate his designs. It did so in the case of this king. Another thing here which should be looked into is—

II. TERROR DISPELLED.

When the Syrian monarch found out that Elisha was in Israel, he despatched a spy to find him out, and when he discovered that he was in Dothan, "he sent thither horses and chariots, and a great host, and they came by night, and compassed the city about." All this struck a panic into the heart of Elisha's servant, and he cried out, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" How did Elisha disarm his servant of this terrible fear? By assuring him that there were more on their side than on the side of their

enemies. "Fear not, for they that be with us are more than be with them." This assurance he gave not merely with words but by ocular demonstration. "And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord I pray Thee, open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and saw; and, behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire, round about Elisha." It is generally supposed that the reference is here to angels that excel in strength, they are in truth the body-guard of the good. They are more in their number than our foes, more in their power, in their invincible determination, in their authority too. But to see them we must have our spiritual eyes open as the prophet's eyes were now.* Faith in the wonderful resources which heaven has provided for the good will dispel all fear. Another point to be observed here is—

III. SUPERNATURALNESS MANIFESTED. Supernaturalness is here manifested: (1) In opening the eyes of the prophet's servant. (2) In bringing under his notice the mountain which was full of horses and chariots of fire. (3) In smiting the blindness of the armies of

* See "Homilist," vol. i. p. 120.

Assyria. "And when they came down (that is the Assyrian army) Elisha prayed unto the Lord, and said, Smite this people, I pray Thee, with blindness; And he smote them with blindness, according to the word of Elisha." These armed legions whose eyes were glaring with vengeance before, were now in midnight darkness. In this state Elisha becomes their guide and conducts them to Samaria, and when there another supernatural act was performed in the restoration of their sight, and then they beheld their terrible position. "Elisha prayed unto the Lord, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha." "Behold, they were in the midst of Samaria," in the hands of the King of Israel. Another point worthy of notice is—

IV. REVENGE OVERCOME.

The king of Syria, hearing that Elisha had revealed their murderous plan to the monarch of Israel, and thus thwarting the purpose and plan of his campaign, he was fired with indignation, and sent thither, that is to Dothan, "horses and chariots, and a great host; and they came by night, and compassed the city about." How

furiously we may suppose revenge flamed in every member of the army as well as the soul of the royal master, as they "compassed the city about." And this revenge would no doubt be intensified when they found that Elisha had betrayed them into the hands of their enemies. They were in the midst of Samaria, within the very grasp of the King of Israel, and at his mercy. How would Elisha advise the King of Israel to treat these revengeful legions now. "And the King of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, my father, shall I smite them? Shall I smite them?" What was the prophet's advice? Did he say destroy them? No. He answered, "*Thou shalt not smite them.*" Did he say, spare their lives, but make them slaves, take them into captivity and make them beasts of burden? Did he say deprive them of all food and starve them to death? No, he said, "Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. And he prepared great provisions for them: And when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master." What was the result of this generous treatment? Did they go away with the old passion of

vengeance burning in them? Away to re-organise themselves in greater numbers, and with greater force to make another and more terrible attack? No. Here is the result. "So the King of Syria came no more into the land of Israel. The magnanimous kindness extinguished

the flames and paralyzed the arms of revenge so that they came no more into the land of Israel. This is the Divine way, nay, the *only* way of conquering our enemies. Evil can only be overcome by good. "The most glorious victory over an enemy is to turn him into a friend."

A Divine Teacher and a Haughty Sceptic.

"THEN ELISHA SAID, HEAR YE THE WORD OF THE LORD; THUS SAITH THE LORD, TO MORROW ABOUT THIS TIME SHALL A MEASURE OF FINE FLOUR BE SOLD FOR A SHEKEL, AND TWO MEASURES OF BARLEY FOR A SHEKEL, IN THE GATE OF SAMARIA. THEN A LORD ON WHOSE HAND THE KING LEANED ANSWERED THE MAN OF GOD, AND SAID, BEHOLD, IF THE LORD WOULD MAKE WINDOWS IN HEAVEN, MIGHT THIS THING BE? AND HE SAID, BEHOLD, THOU SHALT SEE IT WITH THINE EYES, BUT SHALT NOT EAT THEREOF."—2 Kings vii. 1, 2.

HERE are two objects not only to be looked at, but to be studied:—

I. A DIVINE TEACHER. "*Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord, To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.*" Elisha was inspired and commanded by the Almighty God to make a proclamation to a starving population. The famine was still prevailing.

The shadow of death darkened the sky, and his freezing breath was in the air, and men were shivering on the confines of the grave. Thus, when things seemed to be at their worst, Elisha appears as a messenger of mercy from heaven, declaring that on the next morning there would be an abundance of provision obtainable in the gates of Samaria. Two circumstances connected with this promise will apply to the Gospel. First: It was a communication exactly suited

to the condition of those to whom it was addressed. People were starving, and the one great necessity was food, and here it is promised. Mankind are morally lost, what they want is spiritual restoration, and the Gospel proclaims it. Secondly: It was a communication made on the authority of the Eternal. "*Thus saith the Lord.*" That the Gospel is a Divine message is a truth too firmly established even to justify debate. By the Gospel, of course, I do not mean all the tracts of which the book we call the Bible is composed, but the divine biography of Christ as recorded by His four biographers. The other object here to be studied is—

II. A HAUGHTY SCEPTIC. "*Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God and said, Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven this might be.*" Here is one of the most contemptible of all classes of men, a courtier, a crawling sycophant in relation to his king, a haughty despot in regard to all beneath him. When he heard the prophet's deliverance, he forsooth, was too great a man, and thought himself, no doubt, too great a philosopher to believe it. It was the man's *self importance* that begot his incredulity, and this perhaps is the parent of all scepticism and unbelief.

The Force of Will.

"AND THERE WERE FOUR LEPROUS MEN AT THE ENTERING IN OF THE GATE," &c.—2 *Kings* vii. 3-8.

HERE we have—

I. MEN INVOLVED IN THE MOST WRETCHED CONDITION.

"*There were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate.*"

Of all the diseases which afflict mankind none is more painful, loathsome, and disastrous than leprosy. It was the scourge

of the Hebrew race. Moses minutely describes the appearance of this malady, and gives clear and forcible rules to govern the medical treatment of it. Fat and blood and other particles of diet which excite or aggravate constitutional tendencies to diseases

of the skin, were strictly forbidden to the Jews. There are many points of analogy between leprosy and sin. Here we have—

II. Men in the most wretched condition FORMING A RESOLUTION. *"They said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit here we shall die also. Now come, therefore, and let us fall unto the hosts of the Syrians: if they save us alive we shall live, and if they kill us we shall but die."* Emaciated and tortured as might have been their bodily condition, their moral nature had sufficient stamina left to make a resolution. Mind is often more active in physical disease than in physical health. Pain whips all the faculties into action, marshals all the forces of the soul. Truly wonderful is the power of the human will. Let no man justify mental indolence and moral inertia by pleading his bodily troubles. But how often this is done. How often do you hear men say, We can do nothing because of the circumstances in which we are placed. The "cannot" of such is their "will not," and the "will not" is their own choice. Here we have—

III. Men ACTING OUT THE RESOLUTION formed in the most wretched condition. These four poor starving leprous men not only formed a resolution, but they worked it out. *"And they rose up in the twilight to go unto the camp of the Syrians."* In giving practical effect to their resolution, two results followed. First: Difficulties vanished. Their great dread was of the Syrians, but as they approached the Syrian camp, *"Behold, there was no man there."* Wherefore had they fled? Here is the answer, *"For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host. And they said one to another, Lo the King of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to come upon us. Wherefore they rose and fled in the twilight, and left their horses and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life."* By what force were these Syrians scared away? Not the force of the rough elements of nature, or the force of armies, but the force of terrible ideas, ideas that made them hear the noise of the rattling chariots and the tramping steeds of war, that had no existence. But

these ideas, albeit, were ideas from God. "*The Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise.*" God often frightens wicked men by ideas. "God can," says Matthew Henry, "when He pleases, dispirit the boldest and most brave, and make the stoutest heart to tremble. Those that will not fear God, He can make to fear at the shaking of a leaf." Before a strong resolution, apprehended difficulties frequently vanish into air. Where there's a will there's a way, even though it be over rugged mountains and surging floods. A man's "I will" has a power in it mighty as the forces of nature, aye mightier, for it can subordinate them. "If thou hast faith as a grain of mustard seed, thou shalt say to this mountain, depart," &c. Another result which followed was, Secondly: The object was realised. What these poor starving leprous men deeply needed and sought was provisions to appease the cravings of hunger, and to re-invigorate their waning life. And they got them. "*And when these*

lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp they went into one tent and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went, and hid it," &c. Thus they gained even more than they sought; they not only gained food but wealth.

CONCLUSION: — Learn here the wonderful moral force of the human mind. It possesses a power to make resolutions under the most trying external conditions, and the power to work them out successfully. The fiat "I'll try," has wrought wonders in human history, is working wonders now, and so it ever can. Well does Dr. Tulloch say, "Everything yields before the strong and earnest will. It grows by exercise. It excites confidence in others, while it takes to itself the lead. Difficulties before which mere cleverness fails, and which leave the irresolute prostrate and helpless, vanish before it. They not only do not impede its progress, but it often makes of them stepping-stones to a higher and more enduring triumph."

The Right and the Prudent.

"THEN SAID THEY ONE TO ANOTHER: WE DO NOT WELL," &c —
2 Kings vii. 9-11.

These verses record the conference which these four lepers had with one another after they had succeeded in working out their resolution to go into the "hosts of the Syrians," and in this conference we discover—

I. The RIGHT. "*They said one to another, We do not well: This day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace.*" The silver and the gold which they had discovered they had hidden away; and now, perhaps, conscience told them it was not right. It is not right for us to conceal the good we have discovered, or to appropriate it entirely to our own use, let us communicate it. The distribution of good is right. Every man should be ready to communicate. The monopoly of material good is a huge wrong, and the crying sin of the age. Legislation ere long will have to deal with this social abomination sooner or later: it is crushing the millions to the dust. Monopolies in trade, in land, in power, political and ecclesiastical, must be broken up, the wants of society and

the claims of eternal justice demand it. What is truly "*glad tidings,*" to us we should proclaim to others. The rays of joy that fall over our own lives we should not retain, but reflect. In this conference we discover—

II. The PRUDENT. If these poor men felt it was right to communicate to others the tidings of the good they had received or not, they certainly felt it was prudent. "*If we tarry till the morning some mischief will come upon us: Now, therefore, come that we may go and tell the king's household.*" Accordingly they acted. "*So they came and called unto the porter of the City, and they told them saying, we came to the camp of the Syrians, and behold there was no man there—neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they were. And he called to the porters: and they told it to the king's house within.*" Not to do the right thing must cause some "*mischief,*" mischief not only to the body, but to the soul as well, to the entire man. There is no true prudence

apart from rectitude. What is wrong in moral principle is mischievous in conduct. He who is in the right, however outvoted by his age, is always

in the majority, for he has His vote, which carries all material universes and spiritual hierarchies with it. Right is infallible utilitarianism.

The Help that comes to Distressed Men from Without.

"AND THE KING AROSE IN THE NIGHT," &c.—2 Kings vii. 12-16.

These verses suggest a few thoughts concerning the help that sometimes comes to distressed men from *without*. The best help that a man can get in any case is from *within*, from a right working of his own faculties, dependence on his Maker. Still, help from without is often most valuable. There are three kinds of human helpers without. First: Those that help men *by* their will. These are men the chosen of the race, who lay themselves out for philanthropic service. Secondly: Those that help men *against* their will. It often turns out, as in the case of Joseph's brethren, that our enemies really serve us. Thirdly: Those that help men *irrespective* of their will. We are helped in many ways by those who know and care nothing about us. We come into possession of their knowledge, inventions, property. The property of the men of the

last age is ours to-day. Such is the kind of help which the Syrians now rendered the Israelites, and we offer three remarks concerning this help—

I. It was NEEDED. The men of Samaria were in the utmost distress, and the king arose in the night and went forth with his servants (ver. 12) in pursuit of the Syrians, hoping to obtain from them some food to appease the rage of their hunger. To obtain this they calculated on a bloody struggle, for which they were utterly unprepared. But as they approached the spot they found that the Syrians had departed but left their property behind. "*And the way was full of garments and vessels which the Syrians had cast away in their haste.*" Thus in the height of their distress they found relief. It is often so in passing through life; often so in individual as well as in social life. In the greatest ex-

trernity help appears. When the cloud is darkest a beam of light breaks on it.

II. It was UNDERSERVED. Did these Samaritans deserve help? By no means. They were all idolatrous, and worthless people. They merited condign punishment, everlasting ruin. This is true of all men as sinners, whatever help we receive is utterly undeserved. It is of the "Lord's

mercy that we are not consumed."

III. It was UNEXPECTED. They went forth to fight to the death for food, but as they approached the spot the enemy had fled, and in their haste had left provisions behind. "*So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel.*" Are not all men in the Providence of God constantly receiving *unexpected* favors? The choicest blessings come when least expected.

God's Promise Realised and His Truth Vindicated.

"AND THE KING APPOINTED THE LORD ON WHOSE HAND HE LEANED TO HAVE THE CHARGE OF THE GATE," &c.—2 *Kings* vii. 17-20.

We have here an instance of two things—

I. God's PROMISE REALISED. In the first verse of this chapter Elisha had said, "Hear ye the word of the Lord, Thus saith the Lord, To-morrow, about this time, shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel." The morrow had come, and here is the fine flour and the barley selling in the gate of Samaria. Here is the Divine promise fulfilled to the letter. God is ever faithful Who hath promised. If a being makes a promise, and it is not fulfilled, it must be for one of three reasons: either because he was insincere when he made the

promise, or subsequently changed his mind, or met with unforeseen difficulties which he had not the power to surmount. Neither of these can be applied to the All-truthful, Unchangeable, All-seeing, and Almighty God.

II. God's TRUTH VINDICATED. The haughty courtier said to the prophet yesterday, when he was told that a measure of fine flour would be sold for a shekel, "If the Lord would make windows in heaven, then might this thing be." As if he had said, "Do not presume to impose on me, a man of my intelligence and importance. The intellectual rabble may believe in you,

but I cannot." Whereupon the prophet replied, "Thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof." And so it became. Here are the flour and the barley, and there lies dead the haughty sceptic. "*And so it fell out unto him, for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died.*" Truth

has ever vindicated itself, and will ever do so. Men's unbelief in facts does not either destroy or weaken facts, the facts remain. Though all the world deny the existence of a God, moral obligation and future retribution, the facts remain.

Homiletical Breviaries.

Mean Treatment of an Old Prophet by His People.

"AND I SAID UNTO THEM, IF YE THINK GOOD, GIVE ME MY PRICE ; AND IF NOT, FORBEAR. SO THEY WEIGHED FOR MY PRICE THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER. AND THE LORD SAID UNTO ME, CAST IT UNTO THE POTTER ; A GOODLY PRICE THAT I WAS PRISED AT THEM. AND I TOOK THE THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER, AND CAST THEM TO THE POTTER IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD."—*Zechariah* xi. 12, 13.

Here is an old Jewish prophet honourably putting himself in the hands of his congregation, who is dismissing him with thirty pieces of silver. Observe, I.—AN OLD PROPHET'S MANLY OFFER TO HIS CONGREGATION. If you think good, give me my price. If you are weary of me, pay me off and discharge me. If you be willing to continue me longer in your service, I will continue ; or turn me off without wages—I am content. His spirit is (1) *pathetic*, (2) *submissive*, (3) *magnanimous*. II. THE CHURCH'S MISERABLE ACCEPTANCE OF HIS OFFER. "So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver." They accepted the offer : (1) *Immediately*. They took no time for consideration. The money was ready for dismissal. (2)

Despicably. Thirty shekels. (3) *Dishonourably.* Dismissing an old pastor with such a paltry sum. Parting with the man of God with a sham testimonial. An old prophet, after a long service of usefulness, cast upon the world with thirty pieces of silver. (4) *Studiously mean.* "They weighed thirty pieces of silver." They shamefully put the lowest possible value on his ministry. Three pounds—the price of a slave. No class is so badly paid as the prophetic servant. See the extreme want of appreciation of good pastoral service. Zechariah's ministry was divine. What wretchedness of dealing with the prophetic shepherd of Israel. Salary is no test of a good ministry. Some of the best are badly paid. The geniuses are frequently unworthily recognised by their congregations. Jonathan Edwards was too poor to get paper to pen down his superhuman thoughts in the ministry. Voluntaryism in the hands of congregations is dangerous to the ministry. Voluntaryism is frequently angelic in theory, but diabolic in practice. Angelic without, devilish within. The grand argument of some is to starve the ministry. Pastors that are wholly dependent upon the voluntaryism of the congregations, have to be watchful of the motive of their ministry. Pastors are in peril of being more anxious to fill churches than the filling of souls with Christian principles. To have a good salary means often a full house, a crowded audience; and to secure this there is a temptation at times to play tricks, and risk his own soul. Rhapsodic rhetoric, mouthing eloquence, and fawning flattery, how common these are in popular pulpits. Observe, III.—The prophet's MANLY DISDAIN OF HIS PEOPLE'S MEANNESS. "And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter," &c. The act was: (1) Divine. "And the Lord said unto me." (2) Manfully done. (3) A proof of their meanness. IV. An old prophet ROBBED OF HIS JUST CLAIM. (1) Scriptural claim. "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth the corn." (2) Social. For the "workman is worthy of his hire." (3) Equitable. Every class of people have power to claim their due, why not the ministry? (4) Divine. "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? And who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of the fruit," &c. It is nothing but right for the ministry to get and have their due, for the credit of the Church and the good of their successors. Honesty is virtue everywhere.

CONCLUSION.—God frequently punishes publicly mean Churches by presenting them with shepherds of extreme barbarity and cruelty. “For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still, but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces.” Even wild beasts spare the hoof and the claws of the spoil; but, alas, these punishable shepherds devour the “very claws to pieces, and annihilate the flock,” &c. Meanness will be punished.

MORLAIS JONES.

An Introductory Greeting.

“PETER, AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST, TO THE STRANGERS SCATTERED THROUGHOUT PONTUS, GALATIA, CAPPADOCIA, ASIA, AND BITHYNIA, ELECT ACCORDING TO THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD THE FATHER, THROUGH SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT, UNTO OBEDIENCE AND SPRINKLING OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST: GRACE UNTO YOU, AND PEACE, BE MULTIPLIED. BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHICH ACCORDING TO HIS ABUNDANT MERCY HATH BEGOTTEN US AGAIN UNTO A LIVELY HOPE BY THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD.”—1 *Peter* i. 1-3.

Here we have—

I. THE GREETER. Without attempting any glance at the incidents of his life, and the chequered lights of his character, which this letter recalls, we realise much about him as we mark (i.) His *Name*. “Peter;” *i.e.*, the Rock-Man. For what does his name suggest? (a) About his former life. He *was* Simon; and some of the fossil of the old weakness is found in the rock. (β) About Christ’s knowledge of his capacities and promise. (γ) About the ideal of his character. (ii.) His *Vocation*. “An apostle.” Here is (a) Dignity. An apostle is from a teacher what an ambassador is from a king; namely, an authoritative messenger. (β) Brotherhood. An apostle. He is no lordling. (γ) Sanctity; “Of Jesus

Christ." He is not only his "Friend thrice denied, and thrice beloved," but his Master, Redeemer, and King. Here we have—

II. A DESCRIPTION OF THOSE WHOM HE SALUTES. (i.) *Who* are they? "Sojourners of the dispersion." Jewish and Gentile Christians scattered through persecution. (ii.) *Where* were they? Widely scattered, from under the shadow of the mountains of Galilee down to the shores of the Black Sea. (iii.) *What* are they? Divinely elected to perfection of character, they are in the condition (i.) Of being *made holy*, (ii.) Of being made holy *by the Spirit of God*, (iii.) Of being thus made holy *by obedience and consecration*.

III. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE GREETING. "Grace and Peace." The combined Greek and Hebrew blessing. "Grace," the genius of beauty; so of the glory of God which is mercy and forbearance. *Grace* is the merciful attitude of God *towards* man, and His consequent gift *to* man. It is the free compassion of Christ, and the gift of Christ. "*Peace*;" this includes, (i.) right relationship with God, between man and his Maker peace; (ii.) between man and man; (iii.) inner place of harmony, instead of an unruly mob of passions and desires; (iv.) and thus for grace and peace ever increasing; "multiplied."

Bristol.

URIJAH R. THOMAS.

Imitation and Commendation.

"BE YE FOLLOWERS OF ME, EVEN AS I ALSO AM OF CHRIST. NOW I PRAISE YOU, BRETHREN, THAT YE REMEMBER ME IN ALL THINGS, AND KEEP THE ORDINANCES, AS I DELIVERED THEM TO YOU."—1 Cor. xi. 1, 2.

IN these words we have : I. THE PRINCIPLE ON WHICH THE CHARACTERS OF MOST MEN ARE FORMED. "*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*" Men are imitative beings, and from a law of their nature, those whom they most admire, and with whom they most associate, they become like in spirit and in character. The request of Paul here, at first sight, seems somewhat arrogant, "*Be ye followers of me.*" No man has a right to make such an unqualified claim on another. Hence Paul puts the limitation,

“*Even as I also am of Christ.*” The Apostle undoubtedly refers to the preceding verses, in which he speaks of himself as not seeking his own pleasure or profit, but that of others. This Christ did. We are told that He “pleased not Himself.” He means to say, be like me in this respect, as I in this respect resemble Christ. Here is the principle that should regulate our imitation of men; imitate them just so far as they resemble Christ. Children should not imitate their parents, pupils should not imitate their teachers, congregations should not imitate their ministers, only so far as they resemble Christ. In these words we have: II. A COMMENDATION OF MERIT WHICH MANY ARE RELUCTANT TO RENDER. “*Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you.*” In some things, if not in all, some of the Corinthian Christians pleased Paul, did what he considered right—they remembered him, and practically attended to his directions. There was much in them at which he could find fault, and did find fault, but so far as they did the proper thing he praises them. To render generously credit where credit is due, is the characteristic of a great soul, but one which most men are reluctant to perform. I take it to be a duty to render credit where credit is due, but how seldom is this attended to. In domestic matters how is it neglected. A *wife* will go on loyally and lovingly attending to the wants and wishes of her husband, and perhaps not from one year to another does she receive from him one word of hearty commendation. So with *servants* and masters: the employer when he has paid the stipulated stipend to the most useful of his employés, feels he has done his duty, and gives not a word of commendation. So with *ministers* and their congregations. How many ministers are there in every Church, who give the best fruits of their cultivated minds, and by their sweating brain and agonising prayers, produce discourses every week, admirably suited to serve the highest interests of their congregations; and yet he seldom will receive one generous word of hearty commendation for all his toils. Miserable criticisms he will get in abundance, but nothing else. Verily, I believe that no social service is more important, and at the same time more neglected, than the yielding of a generous commendation to the truly commendable.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end.
Since none can compass more than they intend.

THE PULPIT COMMENTARY. Edited by Rev. CANON SPENCE, M.A., and Rev. J. S. EXELL. GENESIS AND JOSHUA. London: Kegan Paul and Co., Paternoster Square.

God's ideas are the only soul-vivifying forces in our fallen world; and these ideas are contained in the histories, the metaphors, conversations, discourses, gospels and epistles of His Holy Book. It is only as they are brought out of the text, and flashed into souls that men are spiritually and really helped. The effective administration of these ideas to living men involves, at least, three distinct departments of labour: the labour of translation,—a faithful rendering of the Original Scriptures into the vernacular; a clear and honest exposition of the meaning of the phraseology; and such an arrangement of those ideas, as shall commend them to the reason, conscience, and experience of living men. There must be the Translator, the Expositor, and the Homiletician. It is seldom that we find all these functions effectively performed by any one man. A man by persevering and painstaking study, may make himself a translator and an exegete, but no man can excel in homiletics who has not a genius for it, a genius to see, to seize, to bring out and philosophically systematise the ideas contained in the Divine paragraph. During our Homilistic labours, we have had, from time to time, MSS. sent from the very first Biblical scholars of the age, which we have had either to return or destroy, they were destitute of suggestive force, living inspiration, and rational order. Some of the greatest sermons we have ever heard or read, have been the productions of men who have known no language but their own. The preaching faculty—like that of the poetic, musical, and painting—is a gift, not an attainment, a native not an acquired endowment. The editors of this valuable work have most practically recognised this fact, and allotted to the con-

tributors those departments for which they are the most qualified. As Biblical scholars, the names of Farrar, Coterill, Whitelaw, Perowne, Plumptre, Rawlinson, Reynolds, &c., take the highest rank. In this work they acquit themselves with their usual ability. We cannot say that the homiletical department is all that we should wish. To go into details on this subject, and to mention names, would be invidious. Suffice it to say that whilst many of the sketches are equal to the very best that can be found in homiletical literature, and most of them are beyond mediocrity; there are a few sadly lacking in attributes of strong self-commending force. On the whole, it is one of the most valuable helpers for preachers that has yet appeared, and it will have—what we heartily desire—a wide circulation.

A CRITICAL GREEK AND ENGLISH CONCORDANCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. Prepared by C. F. HUDSON, HORACE HASTINGS, and EZRA ABBOT, D.D., L.L.D. London: Bagster & Sons, 15, Paternoster Row.

“No one can critically study or estimate the New Revision unless he is in possession of the reasons which governed the Revisers in arriving at their conclusions. But these reasons are scattered through hundreds of MSS., Versions, commentaries, and critical publications, some of them entirely out of the reach of ordinary readers, and the whole requiring a lifetime’s study for their examination.” There is no book in existence that indicates these reasons so fully as the incomparable little volume before us. The New Revision, it would seem, was to a great extent governed by it. Dr. Lightfoot, one of the Revisers, said it was of the greatest use to the Revisers, and that all of them had their copy of it on the table while at work. This is a work of immense labour, great scholarship, and priceless value. “It differs,” says the preface, “from other concordances in various respects. It leads the English reader to the Greek original and its various readings. It leads the Greek scholar to the common English translation, as given both in the text and in the margin. It saves space by omitting extended quotations, referring inquirers to the passages themselves for further information. It furnishes the Greek alphabet with rules of pronunciation, which may be mastered by an hour’s study, and thus obviates the necessity of an imperfect representation of the Greek words in English characters. It classifies the passages

where each Greek word occurs, reveals at a glance the number of ways in which it is translated in the New Testament, shows in what sense it is most frequently or more rarely used, exhibiting in their order, first, the primary, and afterwards the several more remote senses of the different terms. It presents all the important various readings of the four best critical editions of the Greek Testament confirmed by references to the Sinaitic MS. It combines with these peculiarities a cheapness of cost and convenience of form which brings it within the means of the student, and enables him to have it always at his side. That the book is perfect is not to be imagined: but it is hoped that it may meet a want long felt, and fill a place which has never yet been occupied. And that it may be accepted and blessed of Him by whose kind Providence it has been commenced and completed."

ONESIMUS, MEMOIRS OF A DISCIPLE OF ST. PAUL. By the Author of "*Philo-Christus*." London: Macmillan & Co.

We have seen *Philo-Christus* ascribed to Dr. Abbot as its author. This work is from the same pen. Archbishop Whately has somewhere expressed the idea that it is a piece of impertinence to inquire into the authorship of any anonymous production. We agree with this, and as a rule we have always discovered that only the ill-bred and ill-trained in literature do so. It does not matter who the author is. The question is, is the production meritorious and valuable or not? *Philo-Christus* we considered not only a work of singular fascination, but beaming with much warming and quickening light. Such also is this. The man who has sufficient historical knowledge, vivid imagination, and dramatic fancy to bring out the most distinguished men of the old ages, so that you see their forms, and hear their words again, renders no mean service in the sphere of the education of modern men. The work has all the light of historic fact and the charm of romance.

THE PREACHER'S COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF RUTH. With Critical and Exegetical Notes. By the Rev. WALTER BAXENDALE. London: R. D. Dickinson, Farringdon Street.

Mr. Baxendale is to be congratulated on having acquired an extensive acquaintance with the literature of the book of Ruth, and on having, with great clearness, put the best results of long and thorough study before his readers. The preacher of almost every

age and country, and the poet of every school, here speak to us, or sing to us about some or other of the incidents of this sacred fragment of pastoral life. Moreover, Mr. Baxendale has with acute homiletic skill ranged the successive passages of the book under appropriate and telling themes, and has brought to their analysis unusual freshness and force. His preface speaks of his having done his work through much and severe illness, but there is no indication of it in these pages except in his deep love and tenderest sympathy with all that is saddening and perplexing in the strange story of the heroine of the book. And thus the reader gains by the writer's sufferings. So it often is.

HOURS WITH THE BIBLE ; OR, THE SCRIPTURES IN THE LIGHT OF
MODERN DISCOVERY AND KNOWLEDGE. By CUNNINGHAM
GEIKIE, D.D. With Illustrations. London : S. W. Partridge
& Co.

Any work with Dr. Cunningham Geikie's name on the title page is sure of a welcome among the best classes of English readers to-day, especially if such a book gives the opportunities for Dr. Geikie's use of those qualities and resources by which in his great work on "The Life and Words of Christ," he stepped into the front rank of our religious writers. His "Hours with the Bible," gives him just such opportunities in abundance. And he uses them with unabated, not to say with increasing, power. For in these three volumes he lights up the chief events and persons of Biblical history down to the time of Solomon, just as in his *magnum opus* he lit up the scenes and incidents of our Lord's biography. Very extensive, varied and thorough research has placed within our author's easy reach just the resources that explain, corroborate, or verify the records of a long distant past, and of a remote country. Criticism, Travel, Science, indeed almost every form of literature are laid under contribution to the work he has in hand, and conduce to the effect he desires. Without any attempt at elaboration, for his style is beautiful in its transparent and unstrained simplicity, Dr. Geikie throws upon the canvas the principal figures and scenes of Old Testament times, supplying to each of the entire series of pictures, just those accessories that bring out their true colours and proportions. Ministers, local preachers, Sunday-school teachers, and indeed all who are thoughtful Bible students will thank us if they are led by our description to possess themselves of this invaluable production.



Leading Homily.

GOD AS THE CREATOR OF MAN.

"FOR THOU HAST POSSESSED MY REINS: THOU HAST COVERED ME IN MY MOTHER'S WOMB. I WILL PRAISE THEE; FOR I AM FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE: MARVELLOUS ARE THY WORKS; AND THAT MY SOUL KNOWETH RIGHT WELL. MY SUBSTANCE WAS NOT HID FROM THEE, WHEN I WAS MADE IN SECRET, AND CURIOUSLY WROUGHT IN THE LOWEST PARTS OF THE EARTH. THINE EYES DID SEE MY SUBSTANCE, YET BEING UNPERFECT; AND IN THY BOOK ALL MY MEMBERS WERE WRITTEN, WHICH IN CONTINUANCE WERE FASHIONED, WHEN AS YET THERE WAS NONE OF THEM. HOW PRECIOUS ALSO ARE THY THOUGHTS UNTO ME, O GOD! HOW GREAT IS THE SUM OF THEM! IF I SHOULD COUNT THEM, THEY ARE MORE IN NUMBER THAN THE SAND: WHEN I AWAKE, I AM STILL WITH THEE."—Ps. cxxxix. 13-18.

ANNOTATIONS:—Ver. 13 to 18. "*Thou hast possessed my reins,*" &c. The translation of Delitzsch will preclude the necessity of any expository remarks. "For Thou hast brought forth my reins, Thou didst interweave me in my mother's womb. I give Thee thanks that I am fearfully, wonderfully made. Wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knoweth it right well. My bones are not hidden from Thee, I who was wrought in

secret, curiously wrought in the depths of the earth. When an embryo, Thine eyes saw me, and in Thy book were they all written: days which were already sketched out, and for it one among them. And how precious are Thy thoughts unto me O God; how mighty is their sum! If I would count them, they are more than the sand; I awake, and I am still with Thee."

HOMILETICS:—The words present to us *God as the Creator of man*, and four remarks are here suggested concerning this creative act—

I. He created man, who IS A WONDER TO MAN'S SELF. "*For Thou hast possessed my reins, Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made,*" &c. Both the physiologist and the psychologist will endorse the utterance of this poet. Man is "wonderful" in body and wonderful in mind, a microcosm, an epitome of the universe. Carlyle says, "The essence of our being, the mystery in us that calls itself '*I*,' ah, what words can we have for such things?—is a breath of heaven. The Highest Being reveals Himself in man. This body, these faculties, this life of ours is it not all as a vesture for the Unnamed?" "There is but one temple in the universe," says devout Novalis, "and that is the body of man. Nothing is holier than the human form. Bending before man is a reverence done to this revelation in the flesh. We touch heaven when we lay our hand on a human body! This sounds much like a mere flourish of rhetoric: but it is not so. If well meditated, it will turn out to be a scientific fact: the expression in such words as can be had of the actual truth of the thing. We are the miracle of miracles—the great inscrutable mystery of God. We cannot understand it. We know not how to speak of it: but we may feel and know if we like that it is verily so." Our great dramatist also felt the wonderfulness of human nature. "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel: in apprehension how like a god: the beauty of the world—the paragon of animals! And yet to me, what is this quintessence of dust?"

II. He created man who COMES BY THE PROCESS OF EVOLU-

TION. *"My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect."* The doctrine of evolution is not an atheistic doctrine. The oak is not less a Divine creation because it came out of the acorn, nor the acorn a less Divine production because it is composed of various substances of the earth: and man is not less the creation of God because he came by a process of evolution. "If any one should object to," says Dr. Draper, "or deride the doctrine of the evolution, or successive development of the animated forms which constitute that unbroken organic chain reaching from the beginning of life on the globe to the present times, let him reflect that he has himself passed through modifications the counterpart of those he disputes. For nine months his type of life was aquatic, and during that time he assumed in succession many distinct but correlated forms. At birth his type of life became aërial: he began respiring the atmospheric air: new elements of food were supplied to him: the mode of his nutrition changed, but as yet he could see nothing, hear nothing, notice nothing. By degrees, conscious existence was assumed; he became aware that there is an external world. In due time, organs adapted to another change of food, the teeth, appeared, and a change ensued. He then passed through the stages of childhood and youth, his bodily form developing, and with it his intellectual powers. At about fifteen years, in consequence of the evolution which special parts of his system had attained, his moral character changed. New ideas, new passions, influenced him. And that, that was the cause, and this

the effect is demonstrated, when by the skill of the surgeon, these parts have been interfered with. Nor does the development, the metamorphosis end here: it requires many years for the body to reach its full perfection, many years for the mind. A culmination is at length reached, and then there is a decline."

III. He created man who APPEARS BY A DIVINE PLAN—

*"In Thy book all my members were written,
Which in continuance were fashioned,
When as yet there was none of them."*

In all God works by plan, not by impulse or caprice, but by settled methods. He has His "ways" of doing things. Everything in the universe, from the smallest to the largest, is constructed on a fixed and unalterable type. In truth, the whole creation existed in His mind in archetype, millions of years before it took its present form. "*In Thy book,*" metaphorically, God is represented as having written a "*book,*" it is the book of an architect, full of plans. There are the plans of worlds and systems that have been and are no more. The plans of all that now exist, and the plans of all that are yet to appear. First: Because God works by method, we should *study all His works as revelations of Himself*. Secondly: Conformity to His methods should be the *supreme aim of all our activities*. Whatever we do out of keeping with His plans will come to ruin, and involve us in distress. Houses that are built not in conformity with the law of gravitation must fall to pieces sooner or later, they are like the house upon the sand.

IV. He created man, who IS CAPABLE OF APPRECIATING HIS THOUGHTS.

"How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God !

*How great is the sum of them !
 If I should count them,
 They are more in number than the sand :
 When I awake I am still with Thee.**

The most precious thing in the universe is *thought*. It is the seed of character, and the soul of history. Some human thoughts are more precious than others. The thoughts of a few great men are more valuable than the thoughts of a whole generation of ordinary men. The thoughts of God are infinitely more precious than the thoughts of the loftiest created intelligences. They are the roots and archetypes of the universe. It would appear that the author of the text in referring to God's plan, that is, the "*book in which the members were written*," in creating, man was reminded of God's thoughts ; in fact, saw in the plan some of God's thoughts. God's thoughts are indeed absolutely "*precious*." They are original, all comprehensive without succession, infinitely beneficent, immutable, and essentially holy.*

Soul Growth.

"FOR WHICH CAUSE WE FAINT NOT," &c.—2 Cor. iv. 16.

Observe at the outset, (1) Man has a duality of nature, the "*outward*" and the "*inward*," the latter the man of the man. (2) The decayableness of one of the natures. "*Our outward man perish*." This is constantly going on. (3) The constant growth of the inner nature. "*The inward man is renewed day by day*." Soul growth implies three things—I. Soul LIFE. Dead plants and dead animals can no more grow than stones. The inner man unrenewed is morally dead : its life consists in supreme sympathy with the supremely good. Soul growth implies—II. Soul NOURISHMENT. No life can live upon itself. The appropriation of outward elements is essential to sustentation and growth. Moral and spiritual truths are the nutriment of souls. Soul growth implies—III. Soul EXERCISE. All life seems to require exercise. Even the productions of the vegetable world cannot grow without it, though they cannot move themselves, they are moved by the breezes of heaven. Animal life requires it, and the soul must have it in order to grow. It must "*exercise itself unto godliness*." "*They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength*." †

* See "Homilist," Vol. xlv., page 254.

† See "Homilist," Vol. viii., page 296.

The Preacher's Homiletical Commentary.

HOMILETIC SKETCHES ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

OUR PURPOSE.—Many learned and devout men have gone *Philologically* through this **TEHELIA**, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough **HOMILETIC** treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

OUR METHOD.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) **THE HISTORY** of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) **ANNOTATIONS** of the passages. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase or allusion that may occur.—(3) **THE ARGUMENT** of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is amongst the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) **THE HOMILETICS** of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately deduced, as to suggest such thoughts and indicate such sermonizing methods as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

No. CLX.

An Uncommendable Prayer.

“DELIVER ME, O LORD,” &c.—*Ps. cxl. 1-13.*

HISTORY:—“There is a close resemblance between this Psalm and *Psalmus lviii. lxiv.*; also between it and the following *Psalms cxli., cxlii., cxliii.*, of which the author may be the same. It contains many uncommon words and phrases (*e.g.*, in verse 8), and its manner is wholly Davidical. A common opinion is, that it was composed by David with reference to the machinations of Doeg (1 Sam. xxii. 9, xxiii. 19). Others think that Ahithophel is referred to, and the date of the

Psalm, the flight before Absalom. The Syr adds to the title, ‘When Saul cast the javelin against David.’”
—*Canon Cooke*. Perowne and some others do not accept the correctness of the title, and are not satisfied that David is the author.

ANNOTATIONS:—**Ver. 1.** “*Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man; preserve me from the violent man.*” This does not mean one particular man, as the plural in the next verse will indicate.

Ver. 2.—“*Which imagine mis-*

chiefs in their heart; Continually are they gathered together for war." This probably means they stir up and excite disputes and battles.

Ver. 3.—“*They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent—adder’s poison is under their lips.*” “So that they may inflict a fatal wound like the tongue of a serpent. Under their lips shooting out from thence is the poison of the adder. There is the idea of concealment in the expression under the lips, it not only lies there, ready for use, but it is hidden there.”—*Prebendary Young*.

Ver. 4.—“*Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked, preserve me from the violent man, who have purposed to overthrow my goings.*” “Keep me, Jahve, from the hands of the wicked, from the violent man preserve me, who purpose to thrust aside my footsteps.”—*Delitzsch*.

Ver. 5.—“*The proud have hid a snare for me and cords, they have spread a net by the wayside, they have set gins for me.*” “The artifices of the Psalmist’s enemies are compared to the stratagems by which hunters entrap their prey. ‘By the wayside,’ means by the way in which I am to

go. See the words of Saul to the Ziphites (1 Sam. xxiii. 23), to which possibly allusion is made.”—*Canon Cooke*.

Ver. 6, 7, 8.—“*I said unto the Lord, Thou art my God; hear the voice of my supplications, O Lord,*” &c. ‘I said to the Lord, Thou art my God; hear Lord, the voice of my crying. The Lord God is my salvation strength, Thou coverest my head in the day of armour. Grant not, Lord, what the wicked desires, yield not to him his will, they will lift up themselves. The first member of verse 6 is taken verbatim from Ps. xxxi. 14. In the first member there, literally, I trust upon the Lord. On the first member of verse 7, comp. Ps. lxii. 1, 11. My salvation strength upon which I, in myself impotent, ground all my hope of salvation. On the expression: Thou coverest, comp. Psalm v. 11, cxxxix. 13. The head because there the stroke is deadly, comp. 1 Sam. xxviii. 2, and Ps. lx. 7. The day of armour is the day of battle. On the first member of verse 8, comp. Ps. xxvii. 12. “Give me not over to the will of mine enemies. On the expression, They shall lift up or elevate themselves, comp. Ps. lxvi. 7, and as regards the

matter, Deut. xxxii. 27."—*Hengstenberg.*

Ver. 9, 10.—"*As for the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them,*" &c. This means let the calamities which they bring upon others rebound with increased violence on themselves. Let burning coals fall, or rather be hurled at them. To us it is very sad to find that most expositors of this book—like Dr. Burgh—regard these horrid imprecations as inspired prophecies. Alas! Alas!

Ver. 11.—"*Let not any evil speaker be established in the*

earth, evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him."

An invocation this in which most men will join, and a prediction which requires no special inspiration to dictate; violence will ever bring violence, anger begets anger. Ver. 12, 13.—"*I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted and the right of the poor,*" &c. "I know that Jahve will carry through the cause of the afflicted, the right of the poor. Yea, the righteous shall give thanks unto Thy name, the upright shall dwell beside Thy countenance."—*Delitzsch.*

HOMILETICS :—This Psalm we may entitle *an uncommendable prayer*. A prayer it is undoubtedly, an earnest, vigorous prayer, but not a prayer in any way worthy of imitation.

I. It is a prayer CONFINED TO BODILY GOOD. The Psalmist seeks protection from bodily injuries, with which he was threatened from "*the evil man,*" the man of violence and of calumny and crafty malice. There is no reference whatever to his spiritual interests, no breath of entreaty for spiritual enlightenment, purification, moral assimilation to God. He prayed to be delivered from men who threatened him bodily harm, but not from those errors, lusts, passions, prejudices, and guilt that would damn his soul. He dreaded the powers that could kill his body, but not that power of evil that could destroy himself—body and soul.

II. It is a prayer LIMITED ENTIRELY TO HIS OWN INTER-

ESTS. He does not pray for the protection of other men's bodies, still less for their souls. It is all "*me*," "*Deliver me*," &c. The prayer ignores the physical sufferings of those around him, the privations of the poor, the anguish of the diseased, the groans of the dying. It is all for self. It is, in fact, an utterly material and selfish prayer, and therefore a prayer that cannot be commended.

III. It is a prayer BREATHING REVENGE AND NOT FORGIVENESS. "*As for the head of those that compass me about let the mischief of their own lips cover them. Let burning coals fall upon them; let them be cast into the fire, into deep pits that they rise not up again.*" The writer yearns for the destruction of his enemies, not for their salvation. To call the author of such a prayer as this the type of Him who on the Cross breathed out in His dying agonies the words, "Father forgive them, they know not what they do," is revolting blasphemy.

IV. It is a prayer INFLATED WITH PHARISAIC SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS. "*I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor. Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto Thy name, the upright shall dwell in Thy presence.*" This seems to mean, I know that He will maintain my cause, and that I shall "*give thanks*," and dwell in His "*presence*," for I am "*righteous*" and "*upright*." Self-renunciation and profound humility are essential to genuine prayer. "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of face." This is the spirit with which we should approach the Almighty.

CONCLUSION :—Whoever was the author of this prayer it is one that cannot be commended. Alas! that some should entitle it, "*A prayer of the Church*," and alas, that it should be used as a prayer in Christian Churches, and chanted into the ears of Infinite Benevolence!

Sermonic Saplings.

GRACE AND GIFTS.

“FOLLOW AFTER CHARITY,” &c.—1 Cor. xiv. 1-28.

Continued from page 239.



FROM the whole of these verses we gather the three following suggestions, (1) that the grace of charity is superior to all other endowments; (2) that some endowments are superior to others, and (3) that the greatest of all endowments is the qualification to teach. On the first two propositions we have made our remarks. We have now to offer a few thoughts upon the last, which is supported by the twelfth verse, “*Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church.*” Also by the eighteenth verse, “*I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all.*” What do I mean by teaching? Not the mere impartation of the facts of the Gospel, but rather the indoctrinating of the soul with its primary elements and spirit—taking the spirit of the truth out of the letter, and transfusing it into the souls of men. On this subject the apostle’s language suggests three remarks. First: That the Gospel gives to its genuine disciples intelligent convictions that should be communicated to others. This is certainly implied in the words, “*Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church.*” He who has accepted the Gospel in reality becomes

instinct with mighty and irrepressible ideas; ideas which he "cannot but speak," for "necessity is laid" upon him to do so. They are given to him to communicate, not to monopolise, and on their communication the spiritual life, growth, and perfection of mankind depend. Paul assumes in the whole of these verses not only that the members of the Corinthian Church ought to do so, but that they *did* so. "*How is it, then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.*" Another remark suggested is: Secondly: That these intelligent convictions can only be conveyed to others by intelligible language. "*Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?*" The apostle proceeds to say that mere "sound" is not worth much. "*Things without life,*" such as the "*pipe*" and the "*harp*," produce sound. Nay, more, unless the sound gives out clear and distinct ideas, it is not only useless, but injurious. "*If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?*" If in battle the trumpet does not sound clearly the advance or retreat when intended, it is worse than useless. "*So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.*" Whatever might be the unintelligible utterances, whether an unvernacular language or the unsyllabled expressions of emotion, he indicates their inadequacy without interpretation to convey to the hearer intelligent convictions of Gospel

truth. The other remark suggested by the apostle's words is : Thirdly : That the use of a language which the listener cannot understand should not be indulged in. (1) Not in public devotion. "*For if I pray in an unknown tongue my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful,*" &c. (verses 14 to 16). Unintelligible utterances in public devotion fail to excite in the Assembly a spirit of united worship. "*How,*" in such a case, "*shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen, at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest ?*" So far as the individual himself is concerned, it does not matter with what tongue he speaks, or whether he speaks at all. "*For thou verily giveth thanks well, but the other is not edified.*"

" Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed ;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast."

(2) Not in public ministration. Alas, it is to be feared the language of many a sermon is an "*unknown tongue,*" to illiterate audiences, many syllabled, strangely-compounded, high sounding, technical language. Such language gratifies the vanity of the speaker, but wastes the time and tires the patience of the hearer. "*I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all: yet in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.*" The apostle goes on to indicate that such unintelligible utterances in the Church are : (A) Childish. "*Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.*" They

who prize such utterances are infants in knowledge. Such utterances are : (B) Useless. "*In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people.*" As if the apostle had said, remember there was a time in Jewish history when unintelligible language was a sign sent by God, but it proved unavailing so far as concerned the conversion of Israel. Such utterances are : (c) Confounding. "*If, therefore, the whole Church be come together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad ?*" Such utterances, (D) To be of any service, must be interpreted. "*If there be no interpreter let him keep silence in the Church, and let him speak to himself and to God.*"

THE UNITING FORCE OF CHRISTIAN LOVE.

"BUT I DETERMINED THIS WITH MYSELF," &c.—2 Cor. ii. 1-11.

THE subject which these words suggest is the uniting force of Christian love. We see it here uniting all its subjects in a common sympathy, a common retribution, and a common forgiveness.

I. Uniting all its subjects in a common SYMPATHY. "*But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness. For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me?*" The language of Paul in the first four verses implies that the "*heaviness*" of one

would be the heaviness of all, the sorrow of one the sorrow of all, the grief of one the grief of all, the joy of one the joy of all. And this is what Christian love does in all its subjects, wherever it exists; and so to whatever Church they belong, it gathers them together in one, it binds them together as attraction binds the material universe into one magnificent and harmonious system. What one feels all feel, all affections are drawn to a common centre, all hearts point to a common home. The pulsations of all throb in harmony, and make music in the ear of God. We see Christian love here—

II. Uniting all its subjects in a common RETRIBUTION. *"But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part; that I may not overcharge you all. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment which was inflicted of many."* In the whole passage from verses five to ten, Paul's reference is to that incestuous person of whom he wrote in his first epistle (see 1 Cor. v. 1-5), and whose excommunication or "*punishment*" he secured. The retribution which that man received was not the work of any one of them, but all joined in it. They all sympathetically concurred in it, and thus it was inflicted on many. They all loathed the same wrong, and all joined in the same punishment. *True punishment for wrong is the work of love, not vengeance.* Therefore punishment is not for destruction, but for restoration. The punishment that destroys the criminal is Satanic not saintly, devilish not divine. Restoration is the work of love, the work of God. This is here distinctly stated. *"So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him and comfort him, lest, perhaps, such an one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow."* It would seem from the language of the

apostle that the punishment they had inflicted on this guilty person had produced a deep penitential sorrow, lest he "*should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.*" His punishment had answered its purpose, therefore, restore him, and "*confirm your love toward him.*" We see Christian love here —

III. Uniting all its subjects in a common FORGIVENESS. "*To whom ye forgive anthing I forgive also.*" As if Paul had said you and I are so united in loving sympathy, that those whom you forgive I forgive. Observe here three things. First: That forgiveness is the prerogative of Christian love. There is no love that has the spirit of forgiveness but Christian, it is the highest form of love; higher than gratitude, esteem, adoration. It is the "new commandment." Observe here, Secondly: That in the exercise of forgiveness there is a consciousness of Christ. "*For your sakes forgive I it in the person of Christ.*" He who has Christly love in him, has the very consciousness of Christ, feels as He feels, "one in the presence of Christ." How often does Christ urge His genuine disciples to proclaim forgiveness where there is genuine repentance. "Whatsoever is loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Observe, Thirdly: That the forgiving spirit thwarts the purposes of the devil. "*Lest Satan should get an advantage over us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.*" Forgiveness is not, then, the prerogative of priests, but the prerogative of Christian love. A truly Christly man represents Christ, stands, so to say, in His stead; and "Christ hath power on earth to forgive sins."

THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL.

“FURTHERMORE, WHEN I CAME TO TROAS,” &c.—2 Cor. ii. 12-16.

THE subject of these verses is the preaching of the Gospel. Notice—

I. THE DIFFICULTIES CONNECTED WITH IT. “*Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother; but, taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.*” Just at the time when the apostle was about opening his mission at Troas, and the prospect of usefulness seemed most suitable, he encountered a serious difficulty, and that difficulty was the absence of Titus, whom he fully expected. The disappointment cost him such great anxiety, that he resigned his purpose, retired from the scene, and wended his way in another direction. Strange that an inspired man should have met with such a disappointment, and, stranger still, that a disappointment should have so disheartened him that he relinquishes for a time the grand message with which heaven had specially entrusted to him. Antecedently we might have supposed that a man going forth in a true spirit to preach the gospel would encounter no difficulties, that heaven would sweep away all obstructions from his path, but not so. Perhaps no class of men encounter more difficulties in their mission than ministers. Many become so baffled, confounded and depressed that, like Jeremiah, they exclaim, “I will speak no more in Thy name.” Another remark suggested concerning the preaching of the Gospel is—

II. The TRIUMPHS ACHIEVED BY IT. “*Now thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.*” The grandest of all victories is the victory over sin. He who conquers the moral foes of one soul achieves a far grander triumph than he who lays a whole army dead upon the battle plain. There is no grandeur, but infamy, in the latter conquest. It is here taught that these victories were achieved whenever they preached. “*Always causeth us to triumph.*” Wherever they preached, “*in every place,*” and always through God, “*thanks be to God.*” He is the author of their victory, He constructed the weapon, He instructed the soldiers, He inspired and gave effect to the strokes. Another remark suggested concerning the preaching of the gospel is—

III. The INFLUENCES RESULTING FROM IT. “*For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish.*” Observe, First : The *manward* aspect of Gospel preaching. (1) It quickens some. “*To the other the savour of life unto life.*” (2) It destroys others. “*To the one we are the savour of death unto death.*” These effects occur wherever the Gospel is preached. Observe, Secondly : The *Godward* aspect of Gospel preaching. “*We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ.*” Whatever the results of preaching, baneful or beneficial, it is acceptable to God if rightly discharged. Aye, the preaching of the Gospel is the cause of immense good and the occasion of great evil. Like the waters of the sea, the light of the firmament, the breeze of the atmosphere, it is the divine cause of good ; but man, through the perversity of his nature, may make it the occasion of his ruin. Another

remark suggested concerning the preaching of the gospel is—

IV. The SOLEMNITY CONNECTED WITH IT. Paul felt its solemnity, and exclaims, "*Who is sufficient for these things?*" Who, of himself, is "*sufficient*" to expound the meaning of the gospel, to exemplify the spirit of the Gospel, to inwork into human souls the eternal principles of the Gospel? Paul adds in another place, "Our sufficiency is of God."

POSSESSIONS OF A GENUINE CHRISTIAN.

"AND IN THIS CONFIDENCE," &c.—2 Cor. i. 15-22.

THESE verses may be regarded as indicating what every genuine disciple of Christ—that is every Christly man—possesses now and here.

I. He possesses MORAL STABILITY. Paul is here writing on the defensive; indeed, the whole tone of his letter is apologetic. Because he did not visit the Corinthians according to his first promise, they perhaps pronounced him fickle, vacillating, untrue to his word. Against this he protests. "*And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before that ye might have a second benefit, and to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judea.*" Here he admits his intention and his promise, but in reply says emphatically, "*When I therefore was thus minded did I use lightness?*" &c. He claims stability, and the stability which he claims is possessed by all true

Christians, First: A stability of purpose. "*As God is true our word toward you was not yea and nay.*" What we said we meant, there was no equivocation, no "*yea,*" and "*nay,*" in the same breath. In defending his veracity: (1) He makes an asseveration. "*As God is true,*" or as God is faithful, we meant to perform what we promised. (2) He indicates an incongruity. "*For the Son of God Jesus Christ who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea for all, the promises of God in Him are yea,*" &c. He means to say that the Gospel which he had preached to them necessarily bound him to faithfulness. Christ, in whom he lived, and for whom he laboured, was the grand Reality, the "*Amen,*" the truth. The idea of a man in Christ being untruthful, untruthful, was preposterous. An untruthful man cannot be a Christian. This the apostle means and declares. He claims, Secondly: A stability of character. "*How He which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us is God.*" The stability he claims for himself, he accedes to all the Christians at Corinth. How blessed to have the heart fixed, their character "*in Christ,*" established, rooted and grounded in love."

II. He possesses DIVINE CONSECRATION. He that "*hath anointed us is God.*" Among the Jews in olden times, kings, priests, and prophets, were set apart to their offices by anointing them with oil, hence here the word anointed means they were consecrated by God to a Christly life and labour. A truly Christian man is divinely consecrated not to a mere office, but to the noblest character and the sublimest mission. As such he has God's seal on him, "*who hath also sealed us.*"

III. He possesses a PLEDGE OF THE HIGHEST PROGRESS. “*Given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*” “Let us,” says F. W. Robertson, “distinguish between an *earnest* and a pledge. A pledge is something different in kind given in assurance of something else, as when Judah gave his staff and ring in pledge for a lamb which he promised should be given afterwards. But an “*earnest*,” is part of that thing which is eventually to be given, as when the grapes were brought from Canaan, or as when a purchase is made, and part of the money is paid down at once.” There is no finality in the life of goodness, it passes on from “strength to strength,” from “glory to glory.” In every step, after the first, up the celestial mountains, the scenes widen and brighten, and the breezes become more balmy and invigorating as we advance. He who has the Christly life within has already Paradises in germ.

A THREEFOLD THEME.

“MOREOVER, I CALL GOD FOR A RECORD,” &c.—2 Cor.
i. 23, 24.

In these verses we have three things worthy of note—

I. The FULFILMENT OF A PROMISE ADJOURNED. “*Moreover, I call God for a record upon my soul that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.*” Paul here, in the most solemn way, assigns the reason why he had adjourned his promised visit to Corinth. It was not for his personal convenience, or from a change of purpose, or from any indifference towards them, but, on the contrary, out of tender regard to their feelings, “*To*

spare you I came not." Knowing the prevalence of the spirit of schism and disorder which had crept into the Church, he shrank from the exercise of that discipline which of necessity would inflict great pain. Hence, hoping that the admonishing letter which he had addressed to them would have the effect he desired upon them, he delayed. Surely a love so generous, so pure, and exquisitely sympathetic, would justify if not the breaking of a promise, the postponement of its fulfilment. Regard for the feelings of others, it has been said, is the grand characteristic of the "gentleman." Anyhow, it is an essential element in personal Christianity. Here is—

II. AUTHORITY OVER THE FAITH OF OTHERS DISCLAIMED. "*Not for that we have dominion over your faith.*" Had we desired to set up a lordship over you, we might have hastened to you at once, but we respected your feelings, and sought your happiness. The authority which Paul here disclaims has been assumed by priestly ecclesiastics in all times. It is the very spirit of priestism. The minister, whoever he may be, to whatever Church he belongs, who endeavours to make men believe that his own personal ministry, or the ministry of his denomination, is the special ministry of heaven, and essential to the salvation of mankind has in him the intolerant spirit of the priest, he seeks dominion over the faith of men, he would restrain liberty of thought, and subject the minds of men to his credenda. These men, whether Papists or Protestants, Churchmen or Nonconformists, outrage the spirit of the mission they have received, and inflict untold mischief on the minds of men. Another point here noteworthy is—

III. THE TRUE WORK OF A GOSPEL MINISTER. "*But*

are helpers of your joy." He is a helper, not a lord; a helper, not a substitute. A true minister is, First: To help men to *think* aright. To think aright is to think on the right subject, in the right way. Secondly: To help men to *feel* aright. Feel aright in relation to self, mankind, the universe, and God. Thirdly: To help men to *believe* aright. "*By faith ye stand.*" Spiritually men can only "*stand*" by faith, and the work of a true minister is to help people to "*stand*" by "*faith*" on the right foundation. When will ministers come to feel that they are the spiritual "*helpers*" of the people; to help them, not by doing their work for them, but to assist them in working for themselves?

THE WAY IN WHICH THE GOSPEL SHOULD BE PREACHED.

"FOR WE ARE NOT AS MANY WHICH CORRUPT THE WORD OF GOD; BUT AS OF SINCERITY, BUT AS OF GOD IN THE SIGHT OF GOD, SPEAK WE IN CHRIST."—2 Cor. ii. 17.

The words suggests the way in which the Gospel should be preached—

I. With conscious HONESTY. "*As of sincerity.*" This is a state of mind in direct antagonism to all duplicity. No man who is not true to his convictions and to himself, can preach the Gospel. He must be a true man who would preach truth, a loving man who would inculcate love. To have conscious honesty he must preach his own personal convictions of the Gospel, not the opinions of others. The Gospel should be preached—

II. With conscious DIVINITY. "*As of God in the sight of God.*" First: He must be conscious that God

sent him. From God, not from schools, sects, Churches, or ecclesiastics, but direct from God Himself. Secondly: He must be conscious that God *sees* him. "*In the sight of God.*" This consciousness will make him humble, earnest, fearless, caring nothing for the frowns or smiles of his audience. The Gospel should be preached—

III. With conscious CHRISTLINESS. "*Speak we in Christ.*" To be "*in Christ*" is to be in His character, in His spirit. "The love of Christ constraineth me," &c. He who is conscious of the spirit of Christ within him will be free from all self-seeking, all sordid motives, all cravings for popularity and fame.

Church Discipline.

"WHEREFORE THOUGH I WROTE UNTO YOU," &c.—2 Cor. vii. 12-16.

The subjects of these words may be regarded as that of Church discipline, and two general remarks are suggested:—

I. CHURCH DISCIPLINE SHOULD BE EXERCISED FOR THE GOOD OF THE WHOLE CHURCH. "*Wherefore though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.*" The particular individual referred to here, on whom Paul calls discipline to be exercised, was the incestuous person (1 Cor. v. 1). The Apostle here states that this was done not merely for the offender's sake, nor indeed for the sake of the person who the offender had injured (viz., his father, whose wife he had taken as his own). His object in writing was not merely to chastise the one, and to obtain justice and redress for the other, but that "*our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.*" He had a larger aim; it was to prove to them how much he cared for their spiritual purity and reputation. Punishment should not only be for the reformation of the wrong doer, but as an example to others. The unhealthy branch should be cut off for the sake of the tree's health and growth. All true chastisement for wrong, aims not only at the good of the offender, but at the good of the community at large. II. WHEN THE GOOD OF THE CHURCH IS MANIFESTED. HEREBY IT IS A JUST MATTER FOR REJOICING. "*Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.*" The Church was improved by Paul's disciplinary letter. Of this Titus had assured him, for they had "*refreshed*" his "*spirit*" during his visit among them. Their improvement, too, justified the high testimony which he had given Titus concerning them. "*For if I have boasted anything to him of you, I am not ashamed,*" &c. The love of Titus for them was increased by the discovery of it. "*His inward affection is more abundant toward you all.*" Thus the godly sorrow which they manifested on account of that which was wrong amongst them was in every way satisfactory to him; it gave him comfort, it greatly refreshed the spirit of Titus, increased his affection for them, and inspired the Apostle himself with confidence and with joy.

Germes of Thought.

THE PREACHER'S FINGER-POST.

Christian Philanthropy.

“NOW CONCERNING THE COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS,” &c.—

1 Cor. xvi. 1-4.

At the outset three truths are suggested. First: That in the highest theological discussion the urgency of practical benevolence should never be overlooked. Immediately after the apostle had passed through the discussion on the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, he says, “*Now concerning the collection.*” Practical benevolence is for many reasons more important than the grandest theological doctrine; it is doctrine demonstrated, exemplified, and reduced to utility; it is the seed run in fruit. Secondly: That the grandest institutions are

likely to break down in a world of depravity. The young Church at Jerusalem adopted the principle of Christian socialism. As many as were possessors of land, or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of those sold and laid them down at the apostle's feet, and distribution was made to every man according as he had need. A magnificent social system this, a system suited to bind all classes and races of men into the unity of a loving brotherhood. But the swelling tide of human depravity soon bears it away, for here we find Paul urging

a collection for the poor Christians at Jerusalem, many of whom were shut up in prison, and those of them who were released reduced to abject destitution, hence the collection. How many magnificent schemes for the world's good are constantly being dashed to pieces by the black billows of moral corruption. Thirdly: That the practical sympathy for human suffering which Christianity generates, is a divine element. Here are Galatia and Corinth drawn in sympathy for one common object, and that object was suffering saints at Jerusalem. These people lived widely asunder, and separated by many peculiarities, but here they meet together. This is the divine principle that will one day draw all men together in Christ. Our subject is Christian philanthropy, and here we have—

I. ITS CLAIMS ZEALOUSLY ADVOCATED. "*Now concerning the collection.*" Paul was the advocate, and his advocacy glows with zeal. We find that in this matter he proposes the Galatians as an example to the Corinthians, the Corinthians an example to the Macedonian, and both as an example to the Romans (2 Cor. ix. 2; Rom. xv. 26). Were it not for the earnest advocacy of Christly men, the probability is that the divine element of pure and practical social sympathy, would become extinct. It is the living ministry of the Gospel that keeps it alive, and in this it fulfils the grandest of all missions. Here we have—

II. ITS OPERATIONS WISELY DIRECTED. Paul directed, First: That the contributions should be personal. "*Let every one of you lay by him in store.*" No one was exempted, however

poor; the widow's mite was acceptable. If no coin, then give service. Paul directed, Secondly: That the contributions should be systematic. "*Upon the first day of the week.*" Begin the week with deeds of practical benevolence. Paul directed, Thirdly: That the contributions should be religious. "*As God hath prospered him.*" This was the principle to rule the amount. Were this principle acted upon, some of the men who subscribe their ten thousand pounds, and who are lauded the world over as philanthropists, would be found to be churls after all, and those who subscribed their few shillings would appear as princes in the domain of practical charity. But, alas! how men reverse this prin-

ciple: The more they have the less they give. Here we have—

III. Its contributions
HONESTLY DISTRIBUTED.
"*And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.*" It is your duty to see that what you have subscribed shall be honestly distributed, and for this purpose, send men as your almoners, and if it seems necessary to secure the honest distribution, I will go with them. How sadly is this duty frequently neglected, how much money given for charitable purposes is dishonestly used, and misappropriated every year!

God's Will the Rule and Spiritual Usefulness the End of Life.

"NOW I WILL COME UNTO YOU WHEN I SHALL PASS THROUGH MACEDONIA," &c.—1 Cor. xvi. 5-9.

Two remarks are suggested—

I. GOD'S WILL SHOULD BE THE RULE OF LIFE.
"Now I shall come unto you when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia. And it may be that I will abide, yea and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go. For I will not see you now by the way: but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit." Paul had made a plan to visit the Corinthians, to "*tarry a while*" with them, and to spend the winter with them, after he had passed through Macedonia, and tarrying at Ephesus until the Pentecost, but see he rests this plan (no doubt dear to his heart) on the Lord's will, "*if the Lord*

permit." First: There is a *belief* implied here. The great truth implied in this expression of Paul's, is that God is in the history of individual man. He is not merely in the great material universe, in angelic hierarchies, in human empires, communities, churches, families, but in the individual man himself. He is not too absorbed in the vast for this, not too great for this. Paul believed that God was interested in him personally, and that He arranged for him personally. There is something sublime, bracing, and ennobling in the thought that God knows me, cares for me, arranges for me. Secondly: There is an *acquiescence* implied here. "*If the Lord permit.*" This means, I have no

will of my own. As if he had said personally, consulting merely my own will, I should like to winter with you, my Corinthian friends, but I subordinate my will to the will of my God. I feel myself in His hands, and am ready to act in everything according to His arrangements.

II. SPIRITUAL USEFULNESS SHOULD BE THE AIM OF LIFE. "*But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost, for a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.*" Three remarks are here suggested. First: That wherever the Gospel signally triumphs, great opposition may be anticipated. Paul was now at Ephesus, where he had laboured for a considerable time, and with such signal success that a deep and widespread opposition was excited, even to passion. (see Acts xix. 9-20.) It

has ever been so: wherever there has been a great revival of religion there has been unusual opposition. The latent enmity of the serpent is ever roused by the dissemination of spiritual light. Christ kindled a fire upon the earth. Another remark suggested is, Secondly: That opposition to the Gospel often affords specially favourable opportunities for the labour of the evangelist. "*For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.*" Religious excitement is ever more favourable to the spread of religion than religious monotony. You stand a better chance of converting an earnest sceptic than a stagnant religionist. Excitement opens a "*door.*" The other remark suggested is, Thirdly: That the true evangelist will be stimulated in his labours rather

than discouraged by opposition. Instead of quitting Ephesus, where there were so many adversaries, Paul says, "*I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.*" Little

souls are dismayed by difficulties, great souls are roused to action by them. Difficulties awaken their courage, stimulate their activities, and marshal their faculties for battle.

Wholesome Teaching for the Older Ministers.

"NOW IF TIMOTHEUS COME SEE THAT HE MAY BE WITH YOU," &c.—
1 Cor. xvi. 10-12.

TAKING these verses as the foundation for an address to the senior ministers of the Gospel, we say to them:—

I. SHOW A TENDER REGARD FOR THE INTERESTS OF YOUNG MINISTERS. "*Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord as I also do.*" Timothy was young in years and in the faith as well; a man, too, perhaps of delicate frame and nervous temperament, and probably not dis-

tinguished by any great gift, natural or attained. In Corinth there were men of philosophic fame, brilliant genius and oratoric force. He would perhaps feel somewhat abashed in the presence of such, hence the considerate counsel which Paul addresses to the Corinthians to treat him kindly, not to "*despise him,*" nor in any way to dispirit him. Alas! it is not an uncommon thing for elder ministers to disparage the younger ones, and often treat them

with disrespect, and even rudeness. We say to the senior ministers—

II. RISE SUPERIOR TO ALL MINISTERIAL JEALOUSIES. If Paul had been capable of feeling jealousy towards any brother minister, it would have been towards Apollos. He seems to have been a man of distinguished ability and splendid eloquence; moreover, he was very popular in Corinth, greatly admired and extolled by not a few, perhaps more popular even than Paul himself, the head of one of the factions of the Church against which Paul had been contending. Had he been jealous, Paul would have kept him out of Corinth as long as he could, and have treated him as a rival, instead of which he says, "*As touching our brother Apollos I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren.*" Jealousy amongst ministers of the Gospel,

though a most anti-Christian sentiment, is not a very uncommon thing; nay, it is rife, and shows itself often in detracting inuendoes, and symbolic looks and shrugs. Again we say to the senior ministers—

III. BE NOT DISPLEASED IF INFERIOR BRETHREN ACQUIESCE NOT IN YOUR DESIRES. Both the Christian experience and ministerial ability of Apollos were inferior to that of Paul. Notwithstanding this he did not comply with Paul's request: nor did Paul seem displeased. "*His will was not at all to come at this time: but will come when he shall have convenient time.*" If Paul had no authority to enforce his wishes on his brethren, how arrogant it seems for any uninspired minister to attempt it. The only authority which one genuine minister has over another, is the authority of superior intelligence, experience, and moral force.

Personal Sufferings.

"AND WHETHER WE BE AFFLICTED, IT IS FOR YOUR CONSOLATION," &c.—2 Cor. i. 6-11.

THE words suggest a few remarks concerning personal sufferings—

I. They are OFTEN EXPERIENCED IN THE BEST OF ENTERPRISES. What a glorious enterprise Paul and his fellow apostles were engaged in—nothing less than the restoration of mankind to the knowledge, image and friendship, of the great God. Yet how great their sufferings. "*We were pressed out of measure above strength, inasmuch that we despaired even of life.*"* Another remark suggested concerning personal sufferings is—

II. They are EVER NECESSARY FOR THE RENDERING OF THE HIGHEST SERVICE TO MANKIND. "*Whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation*

and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer."

The apostle here teaches that his sufferings and those of his colleagues, were vicarious. He and his co-labourers incurred them in their endeavours to extend the Gospel, and they had the "*consolations*" which came to him, qualified him to sympathise with, and administer comfort to, all who were in the same trying condition. Paul could say to the sufferers at Corinth, We were in sufferings and were comforted, you were in sufferings and may participate in the same comfort. If you are partakers of the same kind of suffering, that is suffer-

* See a sketch of Paul's trials, 2 Cor. xi. 23, 29.

ing on account of your religion, you shall also be partakers of the same comfort. Suppose a man who had been restored from a certain disease by a certain specific, were to meet another suffering under a complaint in all respects identical, and were to say to the man, I cannot only sympathise with you, but I can assure you of that which will cure you, for it has cured me. This, perhaps, may serve as an illustration of the apostle's meaning here, and this every true Christian man who has suffered can say to all. I was in your condition, I was restored, I can sympathise with you, and I urge the same means of restoration. Another remark suggested concerning personal sufferings is—

III. THEIR DETAILMENT PURELY FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS IS JUSTIFIABLE. Paul says, "*We would not, brethren, have you*

ignorant of our trouble."

There is a wonderful tendency in men to parade their sufferings and their trials, to spread them out before men in order to enlist their sympathy, and excite commiseration. This is selfish, is not justifiable. Christ—perhaps the greatest of all sufferers—never did this: in this respect, "He opened not His mouth." But to declare sufferings in order to benefit others, to give them courage and comfort, and to establish between you and them a holy unity in the Divine cause, this is right, this is what Paul does here. He does it that they may believe in his sympathy, and seek the comfort which he himself experienced. Another remark suggested concerning personal sufferings is—

IV. THEIR EXPERIENCE OFTEN PROVES A BLESSING TO THE SUFFERER. They

seem to have done two things for Paul, First: To have transferred his trust in himself to trust in God, "*We had the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves but in God.*" Paul no doubt felt that he was brought near unto death, to the very extreme of suffering, and that led him to look away from self, to put his trust in God. When affliction does this, it is indeed a blessing in disguise. When it detaches

us from the material, and links us to the spiritual, takes us away from self and centres us on God; then, indeed, it worketh out for us a "far more exceeding weight of glory." The sufferings of Paul seem, Secondly: To have awakened prayers by others on his behalf. "*Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our own behalf.*"

Soul Literature.

"DO WE BEGIN AGAIN TO COMMEND OURSELVES?" &c.—2 Cor. iii. 1-3.

IN the early Church it was customary for the member who was travelling into another locality to take with him a letter of commendation from the Church to which he belonged. The Apostle says he did not require such a document from the Corinthian Church as some others did, for

they themselves were letters written on his own heart; and his ministry was a letter written on their hearts also. They were the living "*epistles of Christ, written not in ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.*" OUR

subject is soul literature or Christianity, written on the heart, and I offer five remarks :—

I. Christianity written on the soul is Christianity in the most LEGIBLE form. There are some whose caligraphy is difficult to decipher, and whose thoughts are difficult to understand; their thoughts are misty and their style involved: but what is written on the soul is written so clearly that a child can make it out.

II. Christianity written on the soul is Christianity in the most CONVINCING form. Books have been written on the evidences of Christianity; not a few by the ablest men of their times, such as Paley, Lardner, Butler. But one life permeated and fashioned by the Christian spirit is a far more convincing power than any or all of their most magnificent productions. He who has been transformed by Christianity from the selfish, the sensual, and corrupt, into the spiritual, the benevolent, and the holy, furnishes an argument

that baffles all controversy, and penetrates the heart.

III. Christianity written on the soul is Christianity in the most PERSUASIVE form. There are many books persuasive to piety, and many of them very powerful; but the most powerful of them are weak indeed compared to the mighty force of a Christly life. There is a magnetism in Gospel truth embodied, which you seek for in vain in any written work. When the "Word is made flesh" it is made "mighty through God." Another remark suggested is—

IV. Christianity written on the soul is Christianity in the most ENDURING form. The tablet is imperishable. You may put truth on paper, but the paper will moulder; put it into institutions, but the institutions will dissolve as a cloud; put it on marble or brass, but these are corruptible.

V. Christianity written on the soul is Christianity in the DIVINEST form. The

human hand can inscribe it on parchment or engrave it on stone, but God only can write it on

the heart. "*The Spirit of the living God.*" Paul was but the amanuensis, God is the Author.

The Character and Work of a True Minister of Christ.

"THEREFORE SEEING WE HAVE THIS MINISTRY," &c.—2 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

These words present to us a true minister of Christ, as he is in himself and in his labours, that is his character and work.

I. HIS CHARACTER. It is here suggested that his character is marked by three things, First: Its strength. "*Therefore seeing we have this ministry as we have received mercy we faint not.*" Having in mercy such a Gospel as this to preach we are not disheartened. "*We faint not;*" on the contrary, we are courageous. The character of every minister of Christ should be marked by strength, strength of conviction, strength of principle. The character is marked by, Secondly: Its purity. "*But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty,*" or rather of "shame." Every element

and form of sin is a thing of shame, a thing which makes the conscience blush; falsehood, in chastity, meanness, selfishness, dishonesty, are all things for shame and disgust. A true minister has renounced all these things, he is thoroughly cleansed of them. The character is marked by, Thirdly: Its straightforwardness. "*Not walking in craftiness.*" No attribute of character is more common, at the same time more morally ignoble and anti-Christian than artfulness and stratagem. Ministers of religion are often charged with this "*craftiness,*" and the charge is, alas, too often true. The craft of priests is notorious. Now a true minister is free from this, he is a man of frankness, candour,

transparent honesty. Of the true minister notice—

II. His WORK. How does he fulfil his mission? The answer is given here, First: Negatively. "*Not handling the word of God deceitfully.*" It is thus handled when it is used to support a system, to advance a sect, to exhibit self, to gain a living and to win popularity. He is not a true minister who does this. The answer is given, Secondly: Positively. "*By manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*" (1) He appeals to the conscience of humanity. "*Every man's conscience.*" Elsewhere Paul calls conscience the "inner man," it is in truth the man of the man, his moral self. It is to this he addresses himself, not merely to

the passion or the imagination, or to the intellect, but to that which underlies and permeates every spiritual faculty of man. (2) He appeals to the conscience of humanity through the truth. "*By manifestation of the truth.*" What is the "*truth?*" "*The word of God.*" And that word not as literature but as life, the life of Christ. He is "*the Truth.*" It is truth as it is in Jesus, not in creeds or Churches that he addresses to the conscience. (3) He appeals to the consciences of humanity, through the truth under the felt inspection of Almighty God. "*In the sight of God.*" The man who preaches the truth under a consciousness of the Divine eye will be free from fear, affectation, and from dulness.

The Condition of Unregenerated Men.

"BUT IF OUR GOSPEL BE HID," &c.—2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

These words give us an appalling view of ungodly men.

I. They are BLIND TO

THE GOSPEL. "*If our Gospel be hid,*" (or veiled). Men have different organs of vision. There is the

bodily eye : the Gospel is not "*hid*" from that, they can see the volume that contains it, they can see the print, and perhaps read its chapters. There is the *intellectual* eye to discover its sense and discern its meaning. There is the *spiritual* eye, the conscience which discerns the moral significance of things ; this is the eye which alone can see the Gospel, its real essence. And this is the veiled eye, the eye of conscience is closed, so that the Gospel is no more discerned than the bright heavens are observed by the man who is born blind.

II. They are PERISHING IN SIN. "*It is hid to them that are lost,*" or veiled from them that are perishing. Soul ruin is a gradual process. Souls are neither ruined or saved at once. The wicked are "going into everlasting punishment," they are not hurled there at once ; step by step they proceed. With every sin their sensibility of con-

science is perishing, their power of will is perishing, all the better tendencies of their nature are perishing. It matters not how strong in body, how prosperous in wealth, how elevated in society, they are perishing. Startlingly solemn this !

III. They are VICTIMISED BY SATAN. "*In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.*" Observe : (1) Satan is not a principle, but a personality. (2) Satan has immense dominions. "*The god of this world.*" Satan is a personality that has access to human souls. He enters men, acts on their springs of thought, and fountains of feeling. (3) Satan is a personality whose action on the soul is essentially pernicious. "*The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.*" He closes the moral eye of the soul, "*lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ who is the image of God should shine unto them.*"

The Way and Worth of General Beneficence.

"BUT THIS I SAY, HE WHICH SOWETH," &c.—2 Cor. ix. 6-15.

Our subject is the way and worth of genuine beneficence.

I. The WAY of genuine beneficence. What is the method of its operations? How does it develop itself? First: Bountifully. "*But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.*" The Apostle does not intimate, still less dictate, the amount of contribution he required, but what he requires is bountifulness. Nothing niggardly or from restraint, but with a full, open, generous heart. A man may give bountifully who only subscribes a mite, and niggardly who subscribes his ten thousand pounds. In the fifth verse Paul says, "The same might be ready as a matter of bounty and not as of covetousness." It develops itself, Secondly: Deliberately. "*Every man as he purposeth in his heart so let him give.*"

A spurious charity gives from impulse or pressure. There is a species of eloquence which extorts money, which the giver regrets as soon as he has parted with it. Genuine charity acts not thus; it forms a generous purpose, and from that purpose it acts as love always acts on the universe. It develops itself, Thirdly: Cheerfully. "*Not grudgingly or of necessity.*" There are those who part with their contributions as if they parted with their life-blood. They have been wrung from them, and they groan when they are gone. Genuine charity acts not thus, its greatest happiness is in giving. In sooth, he who gives reluctantly never truly gives at all. "*God loveth a cheerful giver.*" His own happiness is in giving, and He rejoices in the happiness of the creation, and to be happy there must be giving. Notice—

II. The WORTH of gen-

uine beneficence. The most valuable thing in the universe is genuine, practical love or charity. First: It is a most valuable thing in its issues. (1) It confers happiness on the man who practices it. Every act of it is to him a seed of life, a seed which in his own soul, as in a garden, will germinate and grow, and will produce fruits, delectable to the moral tastes, and strengthening to the moral powers of the soul, imperishable fruit. The more of these deed-germs he sows, the more abundant the harvest. "*He which soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.*" He will be "blessed in his deed," in truth, there only is blessedness to be found. (2) It insures the blessing of the Almighty. (a) He sees that the man of charity shall lose nothing by his contributions. "*God is able to make all grace abound toward you: that ye always having all sufficiency in all things may abound to every good*

work." The God of goodness sees that no man shall be really injured by his goodness. "In all thy gifts show a cheerful countenance, and dedicate thy tithes with gladness. Give unto the Most High according as He hath enriched thee: and as thou hast given give thee with a cheerful eye. For the Lord recompenseth, and will give thee seven times as such" (Song of Siruch, chap. xxxv, 9-11). (b) He sees that his beneficent deeds shall be blessed for ever. "*His righteousness remaineth for ever.*" A good deed is a seed that will go on multiplying for ever. Benificence, after all is, righteousness. (3). It alleviates the distress of mankind. "*For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God.*" What hushes the sorrows of the distressed, heals the wounds of the afflicted, relieves the poverty of the indigent, dispels the darkness of the ignorant, &c.?

Practical beneficence. It is, indeed, through this that God helps the world to rise from its fallen condition of guilt and misery. (4) It is promotive of universal worship. "*Whilst by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ.*" And "*which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.*" The tendency of practical beneficence is to turn the world to the universal worship of the one God, the source of all good. Secondly :

It is a most valuable thing in itself. "*Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.*" What is the "*gift*" here? Undoubtedly charity, or practical love. Has Paul here a special reference to Christ? Be it so. The value of that gift was the love which it expressed, incarnated, and diffused. The gift of love is the highest gift, the greatest thing in the universe is mind, the greatest thing in mind is love, and the greatest element in love is practical philanthropy.

DIVINE CHARACTERISTICS OF BENEVOLENCE.—The whole world calls for new work and nobleness. Subdue mutiny, discord, widespread despair, by manfulness, justice, mercy, and wisdom. Chaos is dark, deep as hell: let light be, and there is instead a green, flowery world. O! it is great, and there is no other greatness! To make some nook of God's creation a little fruitfuller, better, more worthy of God; to make some human hearts a little wiser, manfuller, happier, more blessed, less accursed. It is a work for a God! Sooty hell of mutiny, and savagery, and despair can, by man's energy, be made a kind of heaven. Cleared of its soot, of its mutiny, of its need to mutiny. God and all men looking on it well-pleased.—*Carlyle*.

Seeds of Sermons

FROM THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS.

Ministries to Man, Good and Bad.

“AND ELISHA CAME AGAIN TO GILGAL, AND THERE WAS A DEARTH IN THE LAND,” &c.—2 *Kings* iv. 38-44.

Elisha had returned to Gilgal, the seat of a school of the prophets; he had come thither once more on his early circuit, and during the famine which prevailed in the land. As the students sat before their master, he discerned in their emaciated forms the terrible effects upon them of the famine. In the narrative we discover the action of several ministries or events, with which men are visited more or less in passing through this sublunary state.

I. Here is the ministry of SEVERE TRIAL. “*There was a dearth in the land.*” A destitution of those provisions essential to the appeasement of hunger and the sustentation of life is undoubtedly one of the greatest trials. Such destitution is of two kinds, the *avoidable* and the *unavoidable*. The former is common. Tens of thousands of people in this

country abounding with wealth, are, alas, subject to the trial of this destitution every day. But men bring all this destitution on themselves. To the heartless cupidity and unrighteous monopoly of one class of men, and the indolence, extravagance, and intemperance of another, the poverty which is rampant in England to-day must be ascribed. The latter kind of destitution, viz., the *inevitable*, is that recorded in these verses; it arose out of the sterile condition into which nature was thrown. This was the destitution which now prevailed in Israel; it afflicted all the good and the bad. In truth, nature knows of no moral distinctions; she treats kings and paupers, the righteous and the wicked, alike.

II. Here is the ministry of GROSS IGNORANCE. In order to allay the ravenous hunger of his pupils, Elisha said to his

servants: "*Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets. And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds, his lap full, and came and shred them into the pot of pottage, for they knew them not. So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot. And they could not eat thereof.*" Whatever were the herbs which the servants gathered it matters not, they were nauseous and pernicious. "The sons of the prophets," says Matthew Henry, "it would seem were better skilled in divinity than philosophy, and read their Bibles more than their herbals." What they put into the pot tended to produce death rather than to strengthen life. Every day men are afflicted through the gross ignorance of themselves and others. Through ignorance men are everywhere putting "*death in the pot,*" in a material sense. The cook, the doctor, the brewer, the distiller, how much death do they bring into the "*pot*" of human life! Through ignorance, too, men are everywhere putting "*death in the pot*" in

a spiritual sense. Calvinian dogmas, meaningless rites, priestly assumptions, &c., how much death do they bring into the spiritual "*pot*" of life. Man's ignorance of God and His claims on the soul, its nature, laws, and necessary conditions of true spiritual progress, is the minister of death.

III. Here is the ministry of HUMAN KINDNESS. "*And there came a man from Baal Shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, seventy loaves of bread and full ears of corn in the husk thereof.*" Whoever this man was (for no description is given of him save the place of his residence), he was an heaven-inspired philanthropist. Mercy, the highest attribute of heaven, was in him, and he left his home and came forth to minister to the needs of his suffering race. Thank God for that kindness which has survived the fall, and still lives in human hearts. The most precious ministry on earth is this; it feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, heals the diseased, wipes away the tears of human sorrow; it is, indeed, Christ in human flesh. For He was then in the world, though the world knew it not.

IV. Here is the ministry of

SUPERNATURAL POWER. Supernatural power through Elisha comes to the relief of these sufferers. The supernatural was manifested in two ways.

(1) In counteracting the death tendency of what was in the pot. *"But he said, Then bring meat, and he cast it into the pot: and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot."* A supernatural power is required to counteract the pernicious in life. If the Almighty allowed evil to take its course free and full, death would run riot and reduce the whole race to extinction. The supernatural was manifested, (2) In increasing the supplies of life. Elisha commanded his servant to distribute amongst his starving pupils the provisions which the man that came from Baal-Shalisha had brought. To this the servant replied, *"What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said, give the people that they may eat, for thus saith the*

Lord, They shall eat and leave thereof. So he set it before them, and they did eat and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord." As the pot of oil increased in the pouring, so the provisions increased in the eating. It has been said of old of God that He will abundantly bless the "provisions of His people, and satisfy the poor with bread." It is true that the tendency of moral goodness, truth, and justice, skill, prudence, and diligence, has a tendency to increase everywhere the provisions of human life, and it is doing so every day. But in this case there seems to be the exertion of a power transcending the human. However, it may be, that what we call the supernatural is nothing more than the natural. As nature herself is immeasurably beyond our comprehension, transcends our conceptions, for us to speak of the supernatural implies the arrogation of an intelligence which we do not possess.

Subjects Worth Considering.

"AND IT CAME TO PASS AFTER THIS, THAT BEN-HADAD, KING OF SYRIA, GATHERED ALL HIS HOST, AND WENT UP, AND BESIEGED SAMARIA," &c.—2 Kings vi. 24-33.

THESE verses, brimful of the wicked and the horrible, press the following subjects on our attention—

I. THE INHUMANITY OF WAR.

"And it came to pass after this, that Ben-hadad, king of Syria, gathered all his host, and

went up, and besieged Samaria. And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver." The inhumanity of the Syrian king and his hosts in invading Samaria is seen in three things. First: In the shameful disregard to the kindness which the Samaritans had just shown them. In the preceding verses we read that the Samaritans had not only allowed them to escape entire destruction when they were at their mercy, but at the interposition of Elisha, supplied them with abundant provisions to appease their hunger, and to invigorate their frames. Notwithstanding this, they came to wreak ruin on their very saviours. War has no gratitude, no sense of right, no sentiment of kindness, it dehumanises human nature, transforms the man into a fiend. The inhumanity is seen, Secondly: In marching to destroy an already starving people. Through the famine there was starvation in the city before they came. One might have thought that their very condition would have kept the Syrians at bay, but not so, they "*besieged*" the starving

city, so that no food could be brought in until an "*ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver,*" &c. War has no chivalry, or indeed manly courage, for what courage is there in striking the dying?

"How all minor cruelties of man
Are summed in war, conclusive
of all crimes."—*Festus*.

We have here—

II. THE TERRIBLENESS OF HUNGER. To such absolute destitution did these ruthless warriors reduce the inhabitants of Samaria, that not only did the ravenous hunger seize food from the "*ass's head*" and from "*dove's dung,*" but from human flesh, mothers from the children of their womb. "*And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help my lord, O king. And he said, If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barn door, or out of the wine press? And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son that we may eat him to-day: and we will eat my son to-morrow. So we killed my son and did eat him,*" &c. Here is a tragic tale, a tale that makes the heart quail, and the nerves quiver with horror. Hunger in itself is a blessing, it implies

health and stimulates to action, it is in truth the mainspring that keeps the human machinery of the world in action. But when it becomes intense and unappeasable, it sets all moral commandments at defiance, it will break through stone walls, shatter thrones, and break up empires. The one great primary duty of rulers should be to keep the hunger of the people appeased. Alas, everywhere in England we hear its groans, these groanings are the mutterings of nature before the volcanic eruption. We have here—

III. THE MISDIRECTION OF PASSION. The tale of the famishing woman, and the revolting scenes he beheld, pierced the heart of the king of Israel. His feelings at first seem to have been those of great humiliation and deep sympathy, "*And it came to pass when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes.*" But they soon became those of raging wrath against Elisha. "*Then he said, God do so, and more also to me, if the head of Elisha, the son of Shaphat, shall stand on him this day.*" If Elisha had from a malign spirit really brought all this distress upon the Samaritan people, this wrath might have been justified.

Anger against wrong is right. But it was not Elisha that brought the calamities, it was themselves, their idolatries, their sins. Elisha was their greatest friend. The misdirection of human indignation is no uncommon evil. How often men are angry with one another without a cause. Passion misdirected put to death the Son of God Himself. We have here—

IV. THE CALMNESS OF GOODNESS. Whilst all these revolting scenes were taking place, and the king burning with rage against Elisha, resolving on his destruction, where was Elisha? "*But Elisha sat in his house and the elders sat with him.*" With his disciples, fellow-citizens and "*elders*" Elisha sat, without anxiety or alarm. Mark, First: It was not the calmness of servile submission. Though he knew the threat of the king, he had no idea of making an apology or seeking to appease unreasonable indignation, or yield with stoicism to his fate. No. Whilst he sat calmly, the pulse of manhood throbbed stronger in every vein, and when he heard the king's messenger approach the door of his house, he said to the elders, "*See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine*

head?" It is grand to hear men give others their proper title, even though they be kings. Were all men thus honest, many of those who are now called Right Honourables would be Right Abominables. Mark, Secondly: It was not the calmness of *irresolution*. It was not a state of unnerved indifference; on the contrary, there was in it a resolute power. "*Look when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door.*" For the man's own sake hold him, do not let him contract crime by committing murder. Probably at this moment Elisha saw the king himself hurrying towards him, to revoke his murderous decree. Conscious goodness is always calm. He is "kept in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on the Lord." Mark, Thirdly: It was the calmness that *conquers*. The king himself, it

would seem, was soon at the door. He had relented, and hurried to prevent the execution of his murderous command. "*And while he yet talked with them, behold the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold this evil is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer?*"

This utterance is that of the king, and it would seem it was a response to the prophet's exhortation to "*wait for the Lord.*" And he means to say, this evil is not from thee, Elisha, but from the Lord, and it is hopeless, "*What should I wait for the Lord any longer?*" It is not likely that such a humiliating utterance as this would have fallen from the lips of the king, had he met Elisha in a state of furious excitement. No doubt, it was the moral majesty of calmness that struck the heart of the monarch.

Topics for Reflection.

"THEN SPAKE ELISHA UNTO THE WOMAN WHOSE SON HE HAD RESTORED TO LIFE," &c.—2 *Kings* viii. 1-6.

In these verses we have an illustration of the reward of kindness, the ignorance of royalty, and the influence of godliness.

I. THE REWARD OF KINDNESS.

"Then spake Elisha unto the woman whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the Lord hath

called for a famine, and it shall also come upon the land seven years. And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went with her household and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years." Through Elisha this Shunamite woman obtained three great favours: (1) the restoration of her son (chap. iv.), (2) direction for herself and family to leave their old home during the seven years' famine, and then, when she returned from the land of the Philistines, where she had sojourned seven years, (3) the restoration of her old home, which had either fallen into the hands of her kindred, or been confiscated to the crown (verse 6). These are confessedly signal favours, but why were they rendered? Undoubtedly on account of the kindness which this woman had manifested to Elisha, as recorded in the fourth chapter, verses 8 to 10. She had shown him great hospitality, built a chamber for him in her own house, furnished it, and boarded and lodged him for a considerable time. Here, then, is the *reward of kindness*. Observe, First: *Kindness should always awaken gratitude*. The very constitution of the human soul and the moral laws of God as revealed in Christ show this. Yet, alas, so far away has the human

soul gone from its pristine state that real gratitude for favours is somewhat rare. So much so, indeed, that it often turns out that the person on whom you bestow the greatest favours turns out to be your alien and foe. Seneca has truly said that "were ingratitude actionable, there would not be in the whole world courts enough to try the causes in." So common is it that it is almost a maxim that if you would alienate a man from you, you should bestow on him favours. Shakespeare has compared it to the cuckoo—

"The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo
so long

That it had its head bit off by its
young."

Observe, Secondly: *Gratitude will always requite favours*. The man who receives favours without some practical acknowledgment is an ingrate. "A man," says *L'Estrange*, "may as well refuse to deliver up a sum of money that is left him in trust, without a suit, as not to return a good office without asking."

"He that has nature in him must
be grateful,
'Tis the Creator's primary great
law,
That links the chain of beings to
each other,
Joining the greater to the lesser
nature,
Trying the weak and strong, the
poor and powerful,
Subduing men to brutes, and even
brutes to men."—*Macan*.

We have here an illustration of—

II. THE IGNORANCE OF ROYALTY. When the Shunamite woman had returned from the land of the Philistines, she made application to the king for the restoration "*of her house and for her land,*" whereupon "*the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done.*" Now mark the ignorance of this king of Israel. He was so ignorant of Elisha—the man who had been working such wonders in his country, delivering such sublime truths, and rendering such high service to the State, that he here inquires of the prophet's servant concerning him. "It was to his shame," says *Matthew Henry*, "that he needed now to be informed of Elisha's works, when he might have acquainted himself with them as they were being done by Elisha himself." Shame! that kings should be ignorant of the morally best and greatest men in their kingdom! Yet they have always been so, especially if the men, as in Elisha's case, lived in poverty. They know all about the moral pigmies that live in splendid palaces, wear ridiculous titles,

are lords of castles, and owners of broad acres. Such, they not only know, but will honour with their visits, dance with them, shoot pigeons with them, &c. But to go into the obscure home of a truly great man who blesses the country with his soul-quickenings thoughts, and holds fellowship with the heavens, they would no more think of doing, than of travelling to the moon. Will it be always thus? Heaven forbid!

We have an illustration here of—

III. THE INFLUENCE OF GODLINESS. When the king heard from Gehazi who Elisha was and what he had done, "His Majesty" (as we say) granted the woman her request. "*And when the king asked the woman she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.*" It was the involuntary influence of Elisha that disposed the monarch to do all this. Who shall tell the good that even the *involuntary* influence which a godly man communicates to his age? The voluntary influence of a man's life—that is the influence he exerts by intention and conscious efforts—is truly insignificant compared

with that stream of unconscious influence that goes forth from him, not only at all times through his life, but even after he has quitted this mundane sphere. "Though dead he yet speaketh." "As a little silvery ripple," says *Elihu Burritt*, "set in motion by the falling pebble, expands from its inch of radius to the whole compass of the pool, so there

is not a child—not an infant Moses—placed however softly in his bulrush ark upon the sea of time, whose existence does not stir a ripple gyrating outwards and on, until it shall have moved across and spanned the whole ocean of God's eternity, stirring even the river of life and the fountain at which His angels drink."

Striking Characters.

"AND ELISHA CAME TO DAMASCUS," &c.—2 *Kings* viii. 7-15.

WE have here—

I. A DYING KING. "*Ben-hadad the king of Syria was sick.*" Ben-hadad, for his age and country, was a great king, rich and mighty, but now he is on his dying bed. Kings die as well as others. Observe, First: This dying king was very *anxious*. What was he anxious about? Not about any great spiritual interest concerning himself or others, but concerning his own physical condition. "*Shall I recover of this disease?*" This was the question he wanted Elisha to answer. Not, you may be sure, in the negative. Knowing some of the wonders that Elisha had performed, he in all likelihood imagined he would exert his miraculous

power on his behalf, and restore him to life. All men more or less fear death, kings perhaps more than others. If ungodly, they have more to lose and nothing to gain. Observe, Secondly: His anxiety *prompted him to do strange things*. (1) It was strange for him to ask a favour from the man whose death he had ravenously sought. We read (chap. vi. 14, 15), that this Ben-hadad had sent "thither horses and chariots and a great host, and they came by night and compassed the city about," in order to destroy this lonely prophet. What a change is this! Dying hours reverse our judgments, revolutionise our feelings, bring the lofty down. (2) It was strange for

him to ask a favour of a man whose religion he hated. Ben-hadad was an idolater, Elisha was a monotheist, a worshipper of the one true God. Now in dying all the king's idolatrous thoughts have taken wing, and the one God appears as the great reality, and to the servant of that one God he sends, urging a favour. (3) It was strange for him to make costly presents to a poor lonely man. "*The king said unto Hazael, Take a present in thine hand, and go and meet the man of God. And enquire of the Lord by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? So Hazael went to meet him and took a present with him of every good thing of Damascus, forty camel's burden, and came and stood before him,*" &c. What is the wealth, the grandeur, the crown, the sceptre of the mightiest monarch to him when he feels himself dying? He will barter all away for a few short hours of life. We have here—

II. A PATRIOTIC PROPHET.

"*And Elisha said unto him, go say unto him (Ben-hadad) Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the Lord hath showed me that he shall surely die.*" "There was no contradiction in this message. The first part was properly the answer to Ben-hadad's

inquiry. The second part was intended for Hazael, who, like an artful and ambitious courtier, reported only as much of the prophet's statement as suited his own views." Elisha's words seem to mean, he might recover, but will not, "*he shall surely die.*" Thus forecasting the king's death, and knowing the wickedness of this Hazael who was to succeed to the throne, the prophet, smote with patriotic tenderness, looked so "*steadfastly*" into the eye of Hazael that he blushed with shame, and the prophet broke into tears, "*the man of God wept.*" But why did he weep? "*Why weepeth my lord?*" said Hazael. "*And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strongholds wilt thou set on fire,*" &c. This was the overwhelming misery that the prophet foresaw would befall Israel, when this wretched courtier, his interrogator, would take the throne. As Christ foresaw the coming doom of Jerusalem and wept over it, so Elisha saw the horrors approaching Israel, and broke into tears. The loving sympathies of a godly man are not confined to men or places, but spread over the ages, and flow down to bless posterity. We have here—

III. A SELF-IGNORANT COURTIER. "*And Hazael said, But what is thy servant, a dog, that he should do this great thing?*" The conduct of this man as here recorded suggests two general remarks. First: The germs of evil may exist in the mind of a wicked man of which he is utterly unconscious. When Elisha just hinted at the evils which this man would perpetrate, he seemed utterly shocked and insulted. "*Is thy servant a dog?*" As if he had said, "No man could commit the outrages which thou hast depicted, it is the work of a dog to rend and tear and devour, not the work of a man." That moment all the germs of the crimes mentioned by the prophet were in him, and very soon revealed themselves in all their enormity. How ignorant we are of ourselves! There are possibilities of evil and of good within us of which we know nothing. Secondly: By the force of circumstances these germs become developed in all their enormity. Even the very prospect of becoming a king roused this man's baser passions at once. He forges a lie, and he enacts a murder. Although Elisha had told him that Ben-hadad would die, he, in order to obtain power over the mon-

arch, reverses Elisha's statement, and says, "*He told me that thou shouldest surely recover.*" And then to prevent the possibility of this, "*it came to pass on the morrow that he took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water, and spread it on his face, so that he died, and Hazael reigned in his stead.*" Here, then is developed falsehood and murder at the very prospect of becoming a king. No sooner does he take possession of the throne than we read "and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel, from Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites," &c. (2 Kings x. 32, 33). Thus he did what Elisha foretold, and what seemed to himself at the time as an abhorrent impossibility. Thus the educational force of circumstances develop in men evils of which they are utterly ignorant: aye, and the good also. The virtue of some is but vice sleeping, and the faults of some are but virtue struggling into existence and power. He whose eye peers into our deepest nature, judges not by overt acts, but by inward motives, not by what we actually do, but what we desire to do. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

Homiletical Breviaries.

The Will of God.

“PAUL AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST,” &c.—2 *Côr.* i. 1, 2.

Here are three subjects of thought:—I. THE SUPREME LAW. “*By the will of God.*” (1) God has a will. He is, therefore, an intelligent, free, personality. His will explains the origin, sustenance and order of the universe; His will is the force of all forces, and law of all laws. (2) God has a will in relation to individual men. He has a purpose in relation to every man, every man’s existence, mission, and conduct. His will in relation to moral beings is the standard of all conduct and the rule of all destiny. LOVE is its primal font or mainspring. Notice, II. The APOSTOLIC SPIRIT. Judging from what Paul says here, we observe, (1) The apostolic spirit involves subjection to Christ. “*An Apostle of Jesus Christ.*” Christ is the moral Master, he the loving, loyal servant. (2) The apostolic spirit is that of special love for the good. He calls Timothy his “*brother,*” and towards “*the Church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia,*” he glows with loving sympathy. Love for souls, deep, tender, overflowing is the essential qualification for the Gospel apostolate or ministry. Notice, III. The CHIEF GOOD. First: Here is the highest good. “*Grace and peace.*” He who has these has the *summum bonum*. Secondly: Here is the highest good from the highest source. “*From our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*”

The God of Christianity.

“BLESSED BE GOD, EVEN THE FATHER,” &c.—2 *Cor.* i. 3-5.

The God of nature is revealed in nature as the Almighty, and the All-wise. “The invisible things of the world are clearly seen, being made visible by the things that are seen, even His Eternal power and God-head.” But God in Christianity appears in three aspects:—I. As the FATHER OF THE WORLD’S REDEEMER. “*Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Jesus

Christ is the World's Redeemer, and the World's Redeemer is the Son of God. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Another aspect in which God appears in Christianity is: II. As THE SOURCE OF MAN'S MERCIES. "*The Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort,*" or the merciful Father. Mercy implies something more than mere benevolence, it is a modification of goodness, it implies sorrow and suffering. God is good to all, but He is merciful to the afflicted, He compassionates and comforts them. God in nature does not appear as the God of mercy and comfort for the fallen and the lost. God appears: III. As the COMFORTER OF AFFLICTED SAINTS. "*Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble,*" &c. The best of men have their tribulations here. Most, if not all, the men who have entered heaven have passed through much tribulation. First: He comforts His afflicted people "*in all their tribulations.*" Whatever the nature and variety of affliction, He has suitable and adequate comfort to bestow. Moral remorse, worldly losses, social bereavements. He has a healing balm for all. Secondly: He comforts His afflicted people that they may be able to administer comfort to others. "*That we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble.*" Affliction is necessary to qualify us to sympathise with and administer comfort to others. "They comfort others who themselves have borne," says Sophocles. By affliction Christ qualified Himself to comfort others. "We have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities," &c.

Paul's Idea of the Christian Church in Assembly:

"LET THE PROPHETS SPEAK TWO OR THREE, AND LET THE OTHER JUDGE," &c.—1 Cor. xiv. 29-33.

FROM these words we may infer that Paul considered:—I. That the Christian Church in Assembly, on the SAME OCCASION, MIGHT HAVE SEVERAL SPEAKERS TO ADDRESS THEM. "*Let the prophets (or teachers) speak two or three.*" "*For ye may all prophesy one by one.*" If this be so, First: Should Christian teaching be regarded as a profession? It is now so: men are brought up to it, trained for it, and live by it, as architects, lawyers, doctors. Surely preaching the Gospel should no more be regarded as a profession than the talk of loving parents to their children. Secondly: Is

the Church justified in confining its attention to the *ministry of one man*? In most modern congregations there are some Christian men who by natural ability, by experimental knowledge and inspiration, are far more qualified to instruct and comfort the people than their professional and stated minister. Surely official preaching has no authority either in Scripture, reason, or experience, and it must come to an end sooner or later. Every Christian man should be a preacher. Were the half hour allotted in Church services for the sermon to be occupied by three or four Christly men, thoughtful and reverent, with the capability of expression withal, it would not only be far more interesting, but more profitably spent than now. We infer from these words, II. That the Christian Church in Assembly might ALLOW ONE OF ITS GODLY MEN TO RISE AND SPEAK ON THE INSPIRATION OF THE MOMENT. "*If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.*" This does not mean, I presume, that the one who is speaking is to be interrupted, but that after he has delivered his message another, if he felt truly inspired to do so, might rise and address the audience. May it not be that under every discourse there might be some one or more in the audience so divinely excited with a rush of holy thought, that he craves for an utterance, not for his own sake, but for the sake of others; and why should he not have the opportunity? What an interest such an event would add to a religious service! We infer from these words, III. That the Christian Church in Assembly SHOULD SUBMIT THE UTTERANCES OF ITS TEACHERS TO A DEVOUT CRITICAL JUDGMENT. "*Let the others judge,*" or, as the new version has it, "*Let the others discern or discriminate.*" The people were not to accept as a matter of course all that the prophets or teachers spake to them, for even were they inspired they were not infallible. They were to act as it is said the Bereans did, who "*searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so.*" Ah, me! if congregations were so to act, there would soon come an end to the crudities, the assumptions, and the dogmas of modern pulpits. We infer from these words, IV. That the Christian Church in Assembly SHOULD IN ALL ITS SERVICES MAINTAIN ORDER. "*And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all Churches of the Saints.*" It is a characteristic of a true teacher, that however full of inspiration, he can so master his impulses as to prevent confusion. This should always

be done, "*for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.*" Notwithstanding all the liberty of teaching, all the enthusiasm of the new life, where Christianity reigns there will be no disorder, all will be peace. There is an order in dead mechanism, and there is order, too, in the roar of ocean, and the thunder of storm. All that is Divine is under law.

Salutations.

"THE CHURCHES OF ASIA SALUTE YOU," &c.—1 Cor. xvi. 19, 20.

ON these salutations we cannot do better than transcribe the remarks of F. W. Robertson.

We make a remark respecting salutations generally. This epistle has many, but they are not so numerous as in that to the Romans. In both of them individuals are mentioned by name. It was no mere general assurance of attachment he gave them, but one of his personal knowledge and affection. Remark, I. ST. PAUL'S PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS WERE NOT LOST IN GENERAL PHILANTHROPY. That because he entertained regard for the Churches, and for bodies of men, he did not on this account ignore the individuals composing them. It is common enough to profess great interest and zeal for humanity whilst there is indifference all the time about individual men. It is common enough to be zealous about a cause, about some scheme of social good, and yet to be careless respecting individual welfare. But St. Paul's love was from Christ's own Spirit. It was love to the Church generally, and besides, it was love to Aquila and Priscilla. And is not this, too, the nature of God's love who provides for the universe, and yet spends an infinity of care on the fibre of a leaf? Remark, II. THE VALUE OF THE COURTESIES OF LIFE. There are many minds which are indifferent to such things, and fancy themselves above them. It is a profound remark of Prescott's that "liberty is dependent upon forms." Did not the solemn, slow, change in the English constitution, and our freedom from violent submersions, arise from the almost superstitious way in which precedent has been consulted in the manner of every change? But what is of more importance to remember is, that love is dependent upon forms, courtesy of etiquette guards and protects courtesy of heart. How many hearts have been lost irrecoverably, and how many averted eyes and cold looks have been gained from what seemed perhaps but a trifling negligence of forms.

Conscience and the Inner Life of Man.

"FOR OUR REJOICING IS THIS, THE TESTIMONY OF OUR CONSCIENCE, THAT IN SIMPLICITY AND GODLY SINCERITY, NOT WITH FLESHLY WISDOM, BUT BY THE GRACE OF GOD, WE HAVE HAD OUR CONVERSATION IN THE WORLD, AND MORE ABUNDANTLY TO YOU-WARD."—2 Cor. i. 12.

Three remarks are suggested—I. WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE SOUL CONSCIENCE OBSERVES. This is implied in its "*testimony*." The eye of conscience pierces into the deepest secrets of motives, and is cognisant of all our hidden impulses, thoughts, and aims. We may appear sincere to others, but hypocrites to conscience; hypocrites to others, but true to conscience. Conscience is the best judge. Notice, II. WHATEVER IS GOOD IN THE SOUL CONSCIENCE APPROVES. First: Paul's conscience approved of his inner principles. His "*simplicity*" or holiness and "*sincerity*." On these elements it has ever smiled, and will ever smile, but not on "*fleshly wisdom*," carnal policy and worldly expediency. Secondly: Paul's conscience approved of his external demeanour. "*We have had our conversation in the world and more abundantly to you-ward.*" His outward conduct was the effect and expression of his inner life. Conscience smiles on every holy deed, however mean in the sight of men. Notice, III. WHATEVER IS JOYOUS IN THE SOUL CONSCIENCE OCCASIONS. "*Our rejoicing is this*," or our glorying is this. Where there is not an approving conscience there is no real, moral joy. Its "*well-done*" sets the soul to music; with its approval we can stand not only calm and serene, but even triumphant, under the denunciations of the whole world. Dr. South says, "Conscience is undoubtedly the grand repository of all those pleasures which can afford any solid refreshment to the soul; when this is calm and serene, then properly a man enjoys all things, and, what is more, himself; for that he must do before he can enjoy anything else. It will not drop but pour in oil upon the wounded heart; it will not whisper but proclaim a jubilee to the mind."

The Demands of Christianity on its Adherents.

"WATCH YE, STAND FAST IN THE FAITH," &c.—1 Cor. xvi. 13, 14.

HERE are certain demands which Christianity makes on all men. I. A demand for VIGILANCE. "*Watch ye.*" A military metaphor this, derived from the duty of those who are stationed to guard a

camp, or to observe the motions of an enemy. There were many evils, as we have seen in the Corinthian Church, dissensions, heresies, in chastities, intemperances, &c. Hence the necessity of watchfulness. But where do not evils abound? Hosts surround us all, hence "*Watch ye.*" "*Watch and pray*" says Christ. Here is, II. A demand for STABILITY. "*Stand fast in the faith.*" Do not be vacillating, wavering, "*tossed about by every wind of doctrine.*" Strike the roots of your faith deep into the soil of eternal truth. Firmness is no more obstinacy than the stony rock is the deep-rooted oak. Here is, III. A demand for MANLINESS. "*Quit you like men.*" Be courageous, invincible, well equipped, manly, be an ideal man, you can be nothing higher than this, nothing greater. There are great philosophers, great poets, great statesmen, great orators, great warriors who are small men, if men at all, leagues away from the ideal. A great functionary is often a very small man. "*Quit you like men.*" Be heroes in the strife. Here is, IV. A demand for CHARITY. "*Let all your things be done with charity*" or love. Man's life consists of many acts, many "*things done.*" Activity is at once the law and the necessity of his nature. He only really lives as he acts, inactivity is death. But whilst the acts of men are numerous and varied, the animating and controlling spirit should be one, and that spirit is love. (See "*Homilist*," vol. xlviii., p. 204.)

Our Duty to the Truly Useful.

"I BESEECH YOU, BRETHREN," &c.—1 Cor. xvi. 15-18.

THE subject of these verses is our duty to the truly useful, and, I. FOR THE TRULY USEFUL WE SHOULD CHERISH THE HIGHEST RESPECT. There are three useful persons that Paul mentions here. "*Stephanus.*" He was one of Paul's first converts of Achaia, he and his house were baptised by Paul, the only family he ever baptised: and he and his family were "*addicted*" to the ministries of love. "*Fortunatus and Achaicus*" are also mentioned here. To these three personages Paul calls the special attention of the Corinthians, and that because they were useful. They had all ministered to Paul. The latter had supplied to him what the Corinthians had neglected, and they refreshed both his spirit and theirs, hence for this he says, "*acknowledge ye them that are such.*" The truly useful

are the only truly honourable. A man is to be honoured not because of his ancestry, his office, his wealth, but because of what he is morally, and what he does generously in the way of helping the race. The philanthropist is the true prince. II. WITH THE TRULY USEFUL WE SHOULD HEARTILY CO-OPERATE. "*That ye submit yourselves to such, and to every one that helpeth with us and laboureth.*" First: Co-operate with useful men. Secondly: In your co-operation let them take the lead. They have proved themselves worthy of your co-operation.

The Gospel as a Transcendent Benefactor.

"SEEING, THEN, THAT WE HAVE SUCH HOPE," &c.—2 Cor. iii. 12-18.

Amongst the invaluable services which the Gospel confers on man, there are four suggested by the text. It gives him moral courage, spiritual vision, true liberty, and Christ-like glory. It gives him:—

I. MORAL COURAGE. "*Seeing, then that we have such hope, we use great plainness (boldness), of speech, and not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished,*" &c. It would seem that seeing the revelation we have of God in Christ, is not so terrible as His revelation in Moses, we have "*great boldness.*" We need have no superstitious fear or dread. Unlike the Jews, who were afraid to look at the divine radiance on the face of Moses, who trembled at the manifestation of God on Sinai, and who lacked the courage to look at the fact that their system was a temporary one, passing away; we have courage to look calmly at the manifestations of God and the facts of destiny. We use great "*boldness.*" He who has the spirit of Christianity in him, has courage enough to look all questions in the face, and to speak out his convictions with the dauntless force of true manhood. It gives him—

II. SPIRITUAL VISION. "*But their minds were blinded, for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament, which vail is done away in Christ.*" The "*vail*" of Moses was on his face, some material used for the moment, and then withdrawn, but the "*vail*" referred to here was that "*vail*" of prejudice and traditional notions which prevented them from seeing when Paul wrote that the old dispensation has passed away before the brightness of the new. The souls of unrenewed men

are so veiled by depravity, that they fail to see anything in the great universe of spiritual realities. The spiritual is no more to them than nature is to men born blind. Now the Gospel is the only power under God that can take the "*vail*" from the soul, and enable it to see things as they are. Its grand mission is to open the eyes of the blind, &c. It gives him—

III. TRUE LIBERTY. "*Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*" By the "*Spirit of the Lord*" here is meant the Spirit of Christ, His moral temper, and wherever this is, there is freedom. (1) Freedom from the *bondage of ceremonialism*. (2) Freedom from the *trammels of legality*. (3) Freedom from the *dominion of sin*. (4) Freedom from the *fear of death*. The Spirit of Christ is at once the guarantee and the inspiration of that liberty which no despot can take away, no time destroy, the "*glorious liberty of the children of God.*" It gives him—

IV. CHRIST-LIKE GLORY. "*But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord,*" &c. The glory of Christ was the glory of moral excellence. He was the "*brightness of His Father's glory.*" The glory of Christ is communicable, it comes to man through transformation, "*changed into the same image.*" The glory of Christ which comes to man is progressive. "*From glory to glory.*" The Gospel alone can make men glorious.

Preaching.

"FOR WE PREACH NOT OURSELVES," &c.—2 Cor. iv. 5.

Here is—I. A SAD POSSIBILITY in preaching. What is that? To "*preach ourselves.*" To preach ourselves is to propound our own notions, to exhibit our own talents, genius, and learning, to parade our own productions. It is to put self, not Christ, in the front. In these days the egotism of the pulpit has become all but intolerable. Here is—II. A GLORIOUS THEME for preaching. "*Christ Jesus the Lord.*" (1) Preach Him as the Mediator between God and man. He whose grand mission is to reconcile man to his Maker. (2) Preach Him as the great Example for man's imitation. He who embodies the ideal of human perfection and blessedness. Here is—III. The RIGHT SERVICE in preaching. "*Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.*" The true preacher is, (1) The servant of souls. (2) The servant of souls inspired by love for Christ. "*Servants for Jesus' sake.*"

Trials in the Cause of Christ.

"WE ARE TROUBLED ON EVERY SIDE," &c.—2 Cor. iv. 8-12.

THREE remarks are suggested—I. That the TRIALS ENCOUNTERED IN THE CAUSE OF CHRIST ARE SOMETIMES VERY GREAT. Hear what Paul says about his trials, "*We are troubled on every side.*" He speaks of himself as hemmed in by enemies, pursued by enemies, stricken down by enemies, and dragging about with him, as it were, a living corpse. It may be laid down as a principle, that the man who is earnestly engaged in any cause in this world will have to encounter trials. The old prophets had their trials, some of them were insulted, some incarcerated, some martyred. So with John the Baptist, and so with the apostles, so with the confessors, reformers, and revivalists. Another remark suggested is—II. That HOWEVER GREAT THE TRIALS ENCOUNTERED, THEY ARE NOT BEYOND BEARING. The apostle says that although "*troubled on every side, yet not distressed*" or straitened, though "*perplexed,*" or bewildered, yet not benighted, though "*persecuted,*" or pursued, yet not "*forsaken*" or abandoned, though "*cast down,*" or stricken down with a blow, yet not perishing. The idea is that he had support under his trials, they did not entirely crush him. The true labourer in the cause of Christ, however great his trials, is always supported, (1) By the approbation of his own conscience. (2) By the encouraging results of his own labours. (3) By the sustaining strength of God. "As thy days, so thy strength shall be." Another remark suggested is—III. That THE RIGHT BEARING OF THESE TRIALS SUBSERVES THE GOOD OF SOULS. First: In the right bearing of these sufferings, the sufferer reveals the life of Christ to others. "*Always bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus.*" Rightly endured sufferings bring the sufferer so near to the suffering of Christ, that he is in a sense a sharer of those sufferings, and hence in them the life of Jesus is made manifest. Who that has witnessed the true Christian languishing on the bed of suffering and death, has not seen the spirit of the life of Christ revealed? Secondly: In the right bearing of these sufferings, the sufferer promotes in himself and others the Christian life. "*For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh, so then death worketh in us, but life in you.*" "God," says Dean Alford, "exhibits death in the living, that He may also exhibit life in the dying."

The Speech of True Faith.

“WE HAVING THE SAME SPIRIT OF FAITH,” &c.—2 Cor. iv. 13.

The world is full of speech. Human words load the atmosphere. All the speeches may be divided into three classes:—(1) Speech *without* faith, vapid and volatile talk. (2) Speech with *wrong* faith. Wrong faith is of two descriptions:—(a) Faith in wrong subjects. Men believe errors. (b) Improper faith in right subjects. Weak wavering, &c. (3) Speech with *true* faith. Take the true faith as faith in Christ. In Him, not in propositions concerning Him, propositions either including doctrines or facts. I offer three remarks concerning the speech of this faith—I. It is INEVITABLE. The man who truly believes in Christ feels that “necessity is laid upon him,” that he “cannot but speak the things seen and heard.” Such is the influence of faith on man’s social sympathies, that his emotions become irrepressible. Another remark concerning the speech of this faith is—II. It is RATIONAL. How much speech there is in connection even with the religion of Christ that clashes with the doctrines of human reason, and is an insult to common sense. But he who really has faith in Christ can give reasons for his convictions in language clear as the day. It is the lack of true faith that makes our sermons hazy. Another remark concerning the speech of this faith is—III. It is STRONG. True faith in Christ is the strongest of all convictions, and a strong conviction will always have a strong utterance. The words will be free and full.*

Soul Inspiring Facts.

“KNOWING THAT HE WHICH RAISED UP THE LORD JESUS,” &c.—2 Cor. iv. 14, 15.

There are four glorious facts here—I. THAT CHRIST WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD. “*Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus.*” “No fact in history,” says Dr. Arnold, “is more firmly established by argument than this.” II. THAT THE GENUINE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST WILL ALSO BE RAISED. “*Shall raise up us also by (with) Jesus, and shall present us with you.*” Raised as He was raised, and all be presented together. III. THAT ALL THINGS ARE FOR THE GOOD OF THE GOOD. “*All things are for your sakes.*” “We know that all things shall work together for good,” &c. “All

* For further remarks on the subject see “Homilist,” Vol. xxiv., 364.

things are yours." IV. That all THINGS IN LIFE SHOULD RESULT IN THE TRUE WORSHIP OF GOD. "*That the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.*" It is only in worship that the soul can find the free and harmonious development of all its spiritual powers. Worship is heaven. It is not the means to an end, it is the sublimest end of being.

Christian Knowledge concerning the Future Body of the Good.

"FOR WE KNOW THAT IF OUR EARTHLY HOUSE," &c.—*Cor. v. 1-7.*

Two things are to be noticed at the outset: (1) *Metaphorical representations* of the body. The body is here spoken of under the figure of a "*tabernacle*" or a tent, and of a vestment or clothing. These two things would not be so distinct in the mind of the Apostle as they are in ours, for both had the same qualities of moveableness and protection. The "*house*" to which the Apostle refers was not a building of bricks or stone, a superstructure that would be stationary, but a mere tent to be carried about. (2) The *implied necessity* of the body. Paul's language implies that the body has a clothing or protection. As a clothing or protection for the soul it is necessary, both here and in the other world. The soul must have an organ wherever it is. Now what does the Christian know concerning the future body?

I. He knows it will be BETTER THAN THE PRESENT. First: It will be directly divine. "*A building of God.*" The present body is from God, but it comes from Him through secondary instrumentalities. The future body will come direct, it will not be transmitted from sire to son. Secondly: It will be fitted for a higher sphere. "*In the heavens.*" The present body is fitted for the earthly sphere, it is of the "earth, earthy." The future will be fitted for the more ethereal, the celestial. Thirdly: It will be more enduring, "*eternal.*" This body is like the tent, temporary, it has no firm foundation, it is shaken by every gust. We "*perish before the moth.*" The future is eternal, free from the elements of decay. Fourthly: It will be more enjoyable. "*For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven,*" &c. In this body we "*groan, being burdened.*" To what pains and diseases is the present body subject? By implication the Apostle states the future body will be free from all this, for all that is mortal

will be "*swallowed up of life.*" In that body there will be no groaning, no sighs or sorrows, no burden, no weight to depress the energies, to impede progress. The future body will be more fitted to *receive* the high things of God, and more fitted to *communicate* them also.

II. He knows he is now BEING DIVINELY FITTED FOR THE BETTER BODY OF THE FUTURE. "*Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnestness of the Spirit.*" Every seed has its own body, it is the seed that makes the body; the organisation does not produce the life, but the life the organisation. And this spiritual life in man God is now preparing to pass into a higher body. Just as the chrysalis is being fitted to struggle into an organisation with higher appetencies, more exquisite in form, and with wings that shall bear it into mid-heaven. When will you have this body? When your soul has the life-energy to produce it.

The Grace of God Received in Vain.

"WE, THEN, AS WORKERS TOGETHER," &c.—2 Cor. vi. 1, 2.

There are three topics here for meditation.—I. A SUBLIME MISSION. "*Workers together with Him.*" What is the grand work in which God is engaged, and in which we can co-operate? He is engaged in numerous works, works of creation, government, construction, in which we can have no hand. The work here is evidently the work spoken of in the preceding chapter—the work of reconciling man to Himself, the work which He does in Christ. Now all genuine ministers co-operate with Him in this; their grand endeavour is to bring alienated souls into friendship with Him. Blessed partnership this. Another topic here for meditation is—II. A SOLEMN POSSIBILITY. "*Receive not the grace of God in vain.*" The grace of God here evidently refers to the offer of this reconciliation. This may be looked upon objectively or subjectively; objectively it is the Gospel, which is called the "Gospel of the grace of God." Subjectively it is personal Christianity. It may be received "*in vain*" in two forms; many have the offer of reconciliation and reject it, and to them the offer has been received "*in vain.*" It is possible for those who have personally experienced it to lose it. The free agency of man, the exhortations of the Scriptures, and the

facts of apostasy—as in the case of David, Peter, &c.—show the possibility of losing this. No greater calamity can happen to a man than to receive this “*grace in vain*,” hence the earnestness of the apostle. Another topic here is—III. A SUPREME OPPORTUNITY. “*For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee, behold now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.*” To use the words of a modern writer, “There is, so to speak, a “*now*” running through the ages. For each Church and nation, for each individual soul, there is a golden present that may never again recur, and in which lie boundless possibilities for the future. The words of the apostle are, as it were, the transfigured expression of the generalisation of a wide experience, which tells us that “there is a tide in the affairs of men.”

The Highest Office Injured by its Officer.

“GIVING NO OFFENCE IN ANY THING,” &c.—2 Cor. vi. 3-8.

Paul was engaged in the highest office, the office of reconciling men to God, in this he was a co-worker with the Infinite, and here he refers to—I. AN EVIL TO WHICH MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL ARE LIABLE. The evil referred to is bringing blame upon the ministry. “*Giving no offence in anything that the ministry be not blamed.*” So perverse is man that he often degrades some of the highest offices he is called to sustain. There are merchants who degrade commerce, doctors that degrade medicine, judges that degrade justice, statesmen that degrade legislation, kings that degrade the throne; but, what is worse far, there have been ministers who have degraded the ministry, and there are such still, ignorant men, intolerant men, worldly men, unspiritual men, blatant dogmatists. Ah! me, how the pulpit is often degraded. Paul refers here to—II. An evil which must be AVOIDED AT ANY COST. See what Paul did and suffered to avoid this stupendous evil. “*But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,*” &c. Mark (1) How he suffered in order to maintain the honour of the ministry. “*Afflictions,*” “*necessities,*” “*distresses,*” “*stripes,*” “*imprisonments,*” “*tumults,*” “*labours,*” “*watchings,*” “*fastings,*” &c. (2) How he wrought in order to maintain the honour of the ministry. By “*pureness,*” “*knowledge,*”

"longsuffering," "kindness," &c. He learned to labour and to wait. "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." The ministry in these days is too often degraded into a trade, a profession, a medium for the gratification of the vanity, ambition, and the greed of men. The millions have come to call churches and chapels "preaching shops."

Genuine Christian Love.

"O YE CORINTHIANS," &c.—2 Cor. vi. 11-13.

Notice, I.—ITS POWER. What does it do? It enlarges the heart. "*Our heart is enlarged.*" The heart means the whole spiritual nature, and this spiritual nature is capable of indefinite expansion and Christian love, and nothing else can effect this. A man's intellect may be expanded by ideas, but his heart, out of which are "the issues of life," only by love. What a difference between the heart of a miser or a bigot to the heart of a Paul, a Howard, or a Fénelon! Selfishness contracts the soul into a grub, love expands the soul into a seraph. Therefore "covet earnestly the best gift," that is love. Notice, II. ITS IRREPRESSIBILITY. "*Our mouth is open into you.*" A large heart is so full of loving sympathies and aims, that speech becomes a necessity. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." The language of love is the language of nature, the language of eloquence, the language of inspiration, Notice, III. ITS HUNGER. What does it hunger for? "*Ye are not straitened in us but ye are straitened in your own bowels,*" &c., Paul states that their hearts towards him were "*straitened,*" or narrow, compared to his to them. He entreats them to be "*enlarged,*" and thus "*recompense,*" or return his affections. Love, by a necessity of its nature hungers for a return of its affections from the object on which it is bestowed. Paul did not ask them for their money, or their patronage or praise, but simply for a return of the love which he had for them.

Unequally Yoked.

"BE YE NOT UNEQUALLY YOKED," &c.—2 Cor. vi. 14-18.

Observe here three things, I. There is an essential SPIRITUAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THOSE WHO ARE TRULY CONVERTED TO CHRIS-

TIANITY AND THOSE WHO ARE NOT. The line of demarcation is broad and conspicuous. The difference is the difference (1) Between "*righteousness and unrighteousness.*" (2) Between "*light and darkness.*" (3) Between Christ and Satan. "*What concord hath Christ with Belial?*" (4) Between faith and infidelity. "*What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?*" (5) Between the "*temple of God,*" and the "*temple of idols.*" Another fact to be observed is, II. Notwithstanding the spiritual difference the CONVERTED ARE IN DANGER OF BEING ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNCONVERTED. Hence the command, "*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.*" Also the command, "*Come out from among them.*" Alas, we find such association in almost every department of life, in the matrimonial, the commercial, the political, &c. Observe, III. From such an association IT IS THE DUTY OF THE CONVERTED TO EXTRICATE THEMSELVES. "*Wherefore come out from among them.*" &c.: Observe two things (1) The nature of the separation. "*Come out from among them.*" It must be, (a) Voluntary. Not to be driven out, but you must break away from all ties that bind you. Agonise to enter the "strait gate." (b) Entire. "*Touch not the unclean thing.*" Sin is an unclean thing, unclean in its essence, its phases and its influences. Observe, (2) The encouragement to the separation. "*I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters.*" As a Father, what does God do for His children? (a) He *loves* them. His love is the fountain of all the love in the universe. All the love that human parents have for their children is but one drop from the boundless ocean. (b) He *educates* them. Who teaches like God? He teaches the best lesson in the best way for the best end. He educates the whole soul, not for temporal purposes, but for ends spiritual and everlasting. (c) He *guards* them. Human parents can only guard the bodies of their children. This Father guards the soul—the conscience from guilt, the heart from impurity, the intellect from error, &c. (d) He *provides* for them. The best of human parents can only provide for their children a few supplies for their bodies, and that for a time only. This great Father provides for the soul and provides for ever. "He is able to do exceedingly abundantly more than we ask or think."

A Minister's Address to his People.

"HAVING THEREFORE THESE PROMISES," &c.—2 Cor. vii. 1-4.

In these verses the Apostle exhorts the Corinthians to two things :
 I. TO THE PURSUIT OF SPIRITUAL PURITY. "*Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*" He seems to regard the attainment of spiritual purity as consisting in two things. First: Getting rid of the wrong. "*Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.*" Perhaps the reference by "*filthiness*" here referred especially to the idolatry and in chastity which was too prevalent in the Corinthian Church. All sin is "*filthiness*," and cleansable: it is not nature, it is a stain on nature, it is not something inwrought into the very texture of our being, otherwise it could not be cleansed away. It is no more ourselves than the soil on the white robe is the robe. It can, it ought, it must be washed out, that we may appear "*without spot or wrinkle.*" The attainment of spiritual purity consists in, Secondly: "*Perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*" Holiness implies the consecration of our entire nature, flesh and spirit, body and soul, to the divine will, and this requires habitual, solemn effort in "*the fear of God.*" Now the grand end of Christ's mission to the world is to produce this purity in man. "*Having therefore these promises*" (viz., the promises in the last verse of preceding chapter which are in substance the promises of the Gospel), this spiritual purity should be struggled for. "The grace of God hath appeared to all men, teaching them that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts," &c. The supreme desire of every true minister of the Gospel is that his people shall become pure. The Apostle exhorts the Corinthians, II. TO REGARD HIM WITH AFFECTION. "*Receive us*" (open your hearts to us), &c. He grounds his claim on their affection, First: On the fact that he had done harm to none. "*We have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.*" This is said, no doubt, in answer to some of the charges which his enemies had brought against him—said in self-vindication. He had "*wronged no man*;" done injustice to none. He had "*corrupted no man*" in doctrines or morals, he had "*defrauded no man*," he had availed himself of no circumstance in order to extort from them

money or power. A grand thing this for a minister to be able to say to his people without any fear of contradiction, and in the sight of God. He grounds his claim, Secondly : On the fact that he loved them. "*I speak not this to condemn you : for I have said before that ye are in our hearts to live and die with you.*" Although I might "*condemn*" you, I still love you, you are so strong in my affections that I will not only visit you, but would live and die with you, if my mission would allow. He grounds his claim, Thirdly : On the fact that he rejoiced in the good that was in them. "*Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you : I am filled with joy, comfort,*" &c. Thus he commends himself to their affection. It is self-commendation, it is true, but who else could commend him ? There were none greater than he living. There is no egotism in his self-commendation.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

STUDIES IN WORSHIP MUSIC. By J. SPENCER CURWEN. London : Curwen & Sons, 8, Warwick Lane.

This is a very interesting little volume to all who are interested in sacred song. It reveals the wonderful improvement that has been going on in psalmody, especially through this last half century. If the improvement in hymnology were equal to that of music, one would heartily rejoice ; but the thoughtless (and, alas, they are the vast majority), in all Churches consider the mere music to be worship. Only last week we preached to a large congregation in the South of England, where the various choirs from the counties assembled to unite in what was called a service of song. The music struck us as exquisite, but some of the hymns were objectionable both on theological and poetical grounds. On some such occasions we have heard ministers pray that we should so

learn to sing here that we may be fitted to sing in the celestial world. Their idea seemed to be that there were certain tunes necessary for us to practice here in order to join with the choristers above. The sad fact seems to be that congregations are taken up more with sound than sense; and if there is a tune that pleases them, they will sing the most wretched doggerels, arrant nonsense, and revolting blasphemies. They seem utterly regardless of the words. Poor little children are taught to sing that they would like to be angels, when they have no idea what an angel is; and if an angel were to appear to them the apparition would terrify them to death. Adults sing that they would like to stand under the droppings of the blood from the Cross, and "Hark, hark my soul angelic songs are ringing," &c. One has only to look through the "Congregational Hymn Book," and that is on the whole one of the best hymn books, in order to find hundreds of such compositions; compositions which one of the most scholarly hymnists of this age declared could not be sung by any man of reflection or conscience. When shall we have a hymnal containing compositions which the most cultured, thoughtful, and philosophical will be able to sing with all their hearts? We commend this book as the production of a man who has proved himself in every way competent to write on the subject.

JOHN LEECH, AND OTHER PAPERS. By JOHN BROWN, M.D. Edinburgh: David Douglas.

This is a most entertaining book, entertaining as well in the charming style in which it is written, as the subjects which it presents. The subjects are:—John Leech—A Jacobite Family—Mystifications—Miss Stirling Graham, of Duntrune—Thackeray's Death—Marjorie Fleming—Minchmoor—In Clear Dream and Solemn Vision—Jeems the Doorkeeper—Sir E. Landseer's Picture—The Enterkin—The Duke of Athole—Struan—Dick Mihi, or Cur Why? E. V. K. to his Friend in Town—Sir Henry Raeburn. The sketch of John Leech here is admirable in every way, so appreciative, discriminating, and graphic. The seventy pages which it occupies are worth the whole volume, although all the other parts are equally excellent in their way. England never produced a greater artist than Leech in his own rank, so human in his creations, so pure in his sympathies, so life-like in his delineations,

so exquisite in his skill. Under the reign of Forster, Irishmen are come to be regarded as the offscouring of all things; journalistic scribblers denounce them, and orators both Whig and Tory represent them as wild beasts to be gagged and caged. They forget that there are but few Englishmen who are worthy to be mentioned in the same hour with such men as O'Connell, Curran, Shiel, Moore, The Duke of Wellington, Burke, and John Leech, of matchless genius. One's blood grows hot when one sees how the countrymen of these illustrious ones are now treated by Forster, Bright & Co.

THE THEOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. By REV. J. VAN OOSTERZEE, D.D. Translated by MAURICE EVANS, B.A. Fourth Edition. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 27, Paternoster Row.

A work that is in its fourth edition does not require us either to characterise or commend it. This work touches on every vital question in connection with Christian Theology, and the whole is treated with a clearness which all can understand, and a brevity suited for this busy age.

THE REIGN OF CHRIST ON EARTH. By DANIEL TAYLOR. Revised, with a Preface by H. L. HASTINGS. Tenth Thousand. London: S. Beysle & Sons, 15, Paternoster Row.

This is one of the best works that can be consulted on the subject of which it treats, viz.: "The coming of Christ." Best because it contains the conclusions of nearly all the most enlightened men of past ages on the subject, men of all branches of the Church, and of all theological schools. It gives a short sketch of the histories of these men, as well as a statement of their opinions on the point in hand. The work is in its tenth thousand, and therefore has been well received, and must therefore be well known. It deserves a place in every theological library.

ERRORS IN THE USE OF ENGLISH. By the late WILLIAM HODGSON, LL.D. Third edition. Edinburgh: Douglas.

The following extract from the preface will put our readers in possession of the character and aim of this book: "Acting on the principle that example is better than precept, the Spartans im-

pressed upon their children the wisdom of sobriety by showing them the folly of intemperance in the person of the drunken Helot. Similarly this work is meant to set forth the merits of correctness in English composition by furnishing examples of the demerits of incorrectness; to bring home the abstract rule that a sentence must be lucid in order and logical in sequence, by citing such concrete specimens of obscure disorder as, 'The beaux of that day painted their faces as well as the women.' Rule and correct example of that rule might go in at one ear to come out at the other; but the notion of gallants painting their lady loves a brilliant pink is not so easily forgotten, and so long as it is kept in mind this blunder of Isaac D'Israeli's attests the need, as the task of correcting it shows a mode of arranging one's words in lucid order." This book is in some respects similar, but superior, to "Blemishes and Defects," by H. Breen, "The Queen's English," by Dean Alford, "The Dean's English," and "Bad English," by G. W. Moon, "Good English," by E. S. Gould. No one can read this book without being astonished at the grammatical mistakes which some of the most distinguished scholars and authors perpetrate in their compositions. It is a capital book for the student.

MEDITATIONS AND DISQUISITIONS UPON THE FIRST PSALM, &c. By SIR RICHARD BAKER. A new edition. London: Charles Higham, 27a, Farringdon Street.

Sir Richard Baker was a man of transcendent genius, extensive learning, and undoubted piety. The memorial introduction to this volume by Dr. Grosart is very interesting, and full of valuable information concerning our distinguished author. He says concerning the work, "I have read every word from beginning to end. I could not find the time to collate with the original texts, but it seems to me an honest piece of literary work. Personally, I might not have translated some of the Latin quotations and words as the editor has done, nor given some of his explanations in the notes, but, looking at the work broadly, I think the publisher must be pronounced fortunate in his editor." Those who would look into this book to find such critical examinations of the Psalms here considered, as those of Delitzsch, Perowne, Hengstenberg, Alexander, Jennings and Lowe, &c., will, of course, be disappointed. Biblical scholarship has advanced since the days of the Knight. But those who will study it as the soliloquies of a great and learned mind, all

aflame with devotional sentiments, will be greatly charmed and profited, not merely by receiving a new glow to their religious sentiments, but by the entrance of many a grand and suggestive thought given in many a quaint and flashing sentence. The publisher has laid the thoughtful and the devotional of all churches under great obligation, by the reproduction of this, in many respects, matchless volume. Take the following extract selected at random on the chair of the scorner. "There are divers of scorers, some scorn their inferiors, and forget that in scorning they reproach their Maker; some scorn their betters, and seem scholars of the Pharisee to think none so good as themselves, though none so bad; some scorn to be reprov'd, as being wise in their own conceit, of whom saith Solomon, 'there is less hope than of a fool.' Some scorn to hear it said that the world shall ever have an end, and are herein themselves a sign that it is drawing to an end, seeing such mockers, says St. Peter, 'shall come in the last days.' Some scorn the ministers of God's Word, and if at any time they hear them, it is but as the Athenians would hear Paul, to hear what this 'babbler would say.' Some scorn God Himself, and are ready to answer as Pharaoh answered Moses, 'What is God?' and 'Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?' Yet all these scorers have their chair to sit in, set indeed on high, but set in slippery places, and giving them falls as certain, as dangerous, or rather most certain and yet more dangerous, so that he may be justly counted a happy man that can avoid this chair which gives a worse fall than Eli's chair did in which he fell down backward and break his neck."

N.B.—The next number of "The Homilist" will be the last number under the editorship of Dr. Thomas, and will complete *fifty* volumes from commencement. The EXCELSIOR Series, including seven volumes, will then be finished. Those who wish to procure this Series, should do so as early as possible, as in all probability there will be a pressing demand. Because we wish this series to contain our Homiletic Sketches on the two Epistles to Corinthians, we shall occupy the forthcoming number as we have the last two, almost entirely with articles on this subject.

Our readers will be pleased to know that a full Index to the fifty volumes is now in course of preparation, and will soon be published.



THE EDITOR'S ADIEU.

“Welcome ever smiles
And Farewell goes out sighing.”—*Shakespeare.*

IN closing *fifty* volumes of “THE HOMILIST,” and retiring from the Editorship, I might be expected to touch on its history, and to say a final word. It has a history fraught with many a stirring memory to the Editor, if uninteresting to all besides. A few brief, rapid words on the *genesis, growth, influence* and *present standing*, might be justified, peradventure useful.

It began some twenty-eight years ago ; it was an evolution, not a production, an evolution occasioned by an event apparently casual and insignificant.

Soon after my settlement as a minister at Stockwell, my congregation, miserably small at first, became somewhat important, not only in quantity (which is a very small matter) but in quality. Some fourteen or fifteen ministers of the Gospel, educated merchants, doctors, lawyers, and editors identified themselves with my settled and growing audience. Many of them I observed, Sunday after Sunday, took notes of my discourses. This stimulated me. With all the vigour of my nature, and with the fire of my Celtic temperament, I turned away from all theologies and creeds, and gave myself to the study of the Scriptures, in order to find out the soul-quickenings and soul-saving ideas contained therein. One Sunday night, distracted with a toothache, I spent in sleepless torture—albeit an earnestly thinking night. Amidst my tumultuous restless thinkings, the question arose, Could I not do something more for men, than merely to speak to them on the Sunday? What is an audience of a thousand people to the vast populations of London, England, the World? Could I not print some of those thoughts which the most enlightened of my congregation considered worth noting down? Whereupon I resolved to issue a monthly register of my pulpit thinkings, and the word HOMILIST, which was never used before, occurred to me as a good name. On the Monday morning I mapped out the projected serial into various sections, most of which have continued to the present number, and I wrote sketchy articles in each. But, then, who would publish it? My means would not allow me to venture, and publishers, as a rule, are as characteristically cautious as they are greedy.

The following day I went into Paternoster Row, with my MSS. in pocket. I called on Ward & Co., 27, Paternoster Row, a most respectable firm, although denominational, which even at that period was becoming distasteful to me. The more, I trow, a man gets into him the universal and eternal ideas of the Bible, the more sects, churches, chapels, even cathedrals will dwindle into insignificance. What are St. Paul's, Westminster Abbey, St. Peter's at Rome,

in presence of the grand Sermon on the Mount? What are smoky, dying, rush-lights to the clear and quenchless stars? Well, I spoke to the manager. He approved of my plan, but declined the responsibility. He said they would have no objection to publish it—which meant merely to print their *august* name (!) on the cover, and to take fifteen per cent. for doing nothing but delivering to customers. Verily this publishing trade is a wonderful trade! Dr. Johnson is represented as saying that the men in Paternoster Row “feed on the brains of authors.”* I determined to take the financial responsibility of issuing two numbers, and he agreed to give out all that were asked for. At the end of the second number the sale did not pay expenses, and my exchequer would not warrant me to continue. Hence, notice to my readers on the cover to this effect was given. This notice brought me many enthusiastic letters from clergymen and ministers of all denominations urging me to go on, and kindly offering financial help if I would proceed; hence I took the letters to the publishers, whereupon they said they would take all the responsibility, and the very first year netted £300. Year after year the sale and the income continued to advance. Thus “THE HOMILIST” arose, arose out of the chaotic night of dental misery.

On what apparently fortuitous and trivial circumstances the great things of human life depend! In my own history this has been signally illustrated. Thus I was brought first to London. The late Rev. Caleb Morris (next to Roberston, the greatest preacher of this age), happened to take shelter one rainy day under the porch of a house in Cheapside, when a deacon from Stockwell Chapel hurried to the same spot for shelter, who recognised him. In the course of a brief conversation the deacon said he wanted a minister for Stockwell, whereupon Mr. Morris said, “I know the man for you,” and I was speedily introduced. The Crimean War excited in my mind a great desire to create a daily paper to compete with *The Times*; I formulated a scheme, happened to mention it to a joint stock company manager, whom I had never seen before. He seized and legally organised the idea. With that scheme I banded together ten thousand men, created and sustained the weekly *Dial* newspaper, and maintained the *Morn- and Evening Star* for upwards of seven years.† Being in Wales, when the bi-centenary movement was agitating Congregationalists, I happened to write a letter to the *Cambria Daily Leader*‡; propounding a scheme for establishing a University for Wales, and calling on my countrymen to join it. That college is established at Aberystwith, and a magnificent building it is.§ I happened to preside some years ago at a meeting of teetotallers at

* Carlyle does not seem to have had a much better opinion of them, for he says: “The Publishers of the universe are bipeds of an erect form, and speak articulately: therefore they deserve the name of men, and from me at least shall always get it. But for the rest their thoughts are redolent of solid pudding. They are as the pack-horses of literature, which the author should direct with a halter and a goad, and remunerate with clover and split beans. Woe to him if the process is reversed, if he, with a noose about his neck is tied to their unsightly tail, and made to plash and sprawl along with them through every stank to which their love of provant leads them. Better it were to be a downright hairy cuddy, and crop thistles and gorse on any of the commons of this isle.”

† See *Homilist*, vol. xxxix., page 393.

‡ This was the first daily paper issued in Wales, and was started by me in connection with my son, David Morgan Thomas, Barrister.

§ See *Homilist*, vol. xl., page 456.

Stockwell Institute, and was induced to take the pledge for the sake of example to others. In thinking over what I had done, I drew up a prospectus to establish a "Working Man's Club" in every village, town, hamlet, throughout the Empire, minus alcoholic drinks. A copy of the prospectus was sent to Lord Brougham. He was so interested in the prospectus that he called a meeting at the Law Amendment Society Rooms, Piccadilly, to discuss the movement. I was present, and then and there the scheme was organised, a secretary appointed, and from that originated all the Working Men's Clubs and Coffee Houses, which now number thousands.* All this I incidentally refer to, not egotistically, but as an illustration of the principle that there is nothing small in the history of men. The philosophy of trifles is a subject for volumes.

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we may."

Now a word about its *growth*. It has grown in the favour of its constituents from the beginning, and even last week between three and four hundred volumes at full price were exported to one house in Canada. Very silent has been its progress. It was not heralded into the world with the trumpet blast of patrons, or with inflated advertisements and journalistic hosannas. Noiselessly it has proceeded from year to year. It has been but seldom advertised. Silently as the little mustard seed has it grown. Even the denomination that claims its editor as one of its members has never given it a friendly word in any of its annual meetings. Three or four years ago a D.D. (alas, no more) a chairman of the Congregational Union, spoke to me in a casual way about "THE HOMILIST." I said "What, do you ever see it?" For he was one of those denominationalised men who lived in the circle of denominational ideas. He said, "Yes, and I owe much to it, I have all the volumes, and even last Sunday my best thoughts were taken from it." Whereupon I said to him, "Is it not astonishing that in referring, as I have often heard you do, in common with your predecessors in the chair at those meetings, to religious periodicals, the name of 'THE HOMILIST,' has never been mentioned? The *Christian Witness*, the *Penny Magazine*, the *Congregationalist*, the *Quarterly*, how all these have been extolled and recommended from the chair!" Whereupon he said, "Indeed, it is too bad!" The fact is, ministers do not like to refer to "THE HOMILIST" in their public assemblies, and those who make the most use of it are the most shy in this respect. I once preached for a minister who was from home, with whose wife I was acquainted long before he married; for her father was a dear old friend of mine. After the evening service she said, "I wish you would publish your sermons, Dr. Thomas." I said, "That is just what I always do. Have you not heard of 'THE HOMILIST?'" She said, "No." On the Monday when her husband returned, I said, "I thought you saw 'THE HOMILIST?'" "Yes," he said, "I have every volume:" And he took me to a cupboard and showed me all the volumes locked up. I have come to this conclusion, that if you meet with a man who shrugs his shoulders at the name of "THE HOMILIST," he is almost sure to be a clandestine subscriber to it. Notwithstanding all this, it has grown—aye, and grown notwithstanding constant competition. A righteous competition in homiletic literature I have

* See *Homilist*, vol. xl., page 392.

ever encouraged : the pages of "THE HOMILIST" will bear witness to this. But a competition in which the thoughts of the "THE HOMILIST" are appropriated, and the style imitated is despicable; though not uncommon.* A Welsh brother said to me some time ago, referring to the editor of one of these periodicals, "He packs up the sugar in the same style, but it is not the same sugar by any means." How many competitors have arisen! First came the *Evangelical Pulpit*, it is gone, then the *Congregational Pulpit*, with all the leading denominational ministers for contributors—gone: then the *Study*, which was to supersede "THE HOMILIST" by its cheapness—gone: then the *Analyst*, which a talented minister denominated, "the feminine of the 'THE HOMILIST'"—gone: it came like Simon Magus, "giving out that himself was some great one." This *Analyst*, like a painted bubble on a frothy, roaring rill, was soon swept away by the breezes of honest thought. Then came a serial called the *Homiletical Quarterly*, which sank into a monthly, and this monthly is now, I understand, in dying throes, notwithstanding the great names which it parades as its patrons.

Another word about the influence of "THE HOMILIST." Whatever public work, apart from the pulpit, I have achieved, I owe to the influence of "THE HOMILIST." Into whatever town I have gone in connection with the journalistic movement, I have been met by clergymen and ministers of all denominations, and thus I obtained, almost single handedly, subscriptions to the amount of £240,000: about three times the amount that the advocacy of the most popular ministers of the Congregational body, with all the Memorial Hall machinery to aid them, have been able to obtain for the Jubilee Fund. It was thus with the "University for Wales," the "Working Men's Club;" "THE HOMILIST" prepared my way everywhere. An incident illustrative of its influence just starts to my memory. When I was aflame with my journalistic movement, I happened to meet with a Baptist minister in the shop of my publisher. I propounded to him my project, explained its principles and its aims. The conversation suggested to him the starting of a weekly paper to be called *The Christian World*. He drew up his plan, and extensively advertised by means of journals and placards, its advert. This went on for months without my knowing it. At length my attention was called to the advertisement, and behold there was attached to it an extract from the peroration of my discourse on "Journalism and the Pulpit." The peroration reads as follows: "Such a journal as the one proposed will speak to tens of thousands, speak to those who never enter a place of worship, speak in the counting-houses of merchants, in the mansions of statesmen, and palaces of royalty. Such a journal, instead of sneering at religious institutions, and endeavouring to weaken their influence on the popular mind, would seek to purify and invigorate them, and become a forerunner and helpmate to every intelligent, devoted, and honest minister of Christ. Such a journal would be above bribes and intimidation, and do its work under the broad sun of rectitude, regardless of the smiles and frowns of men. Such a journal would supply nourishment, inspiration and courage to all the

* Since "THE HOMILIST," has arisen, some of the men of the *minor mould* in the Churches have come forward as homiletic writers, and published, in their own names, discourses which have been taken from "THE HOMILIST."

lesser journals of the country, which struggle for the right, and help on a righteous cause, however low its condition, or obscure its advocates. Such a journal would preach liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound, and be everywhere the terror of tyrants and the friend of the free. Such a journal would take up, employ, and circulate the enlightening, renovating, thoughts of the most honest men, profoundest thinkers and healthiest patriots. Such a journal would be an enemy to despotism at home and abroad: an asylum for 'oppressed nationalities:' a co-worker with all who endeavour to enthrone truth and righteousness in the land: a school for ignorant statesmen: a rallying point for the true and progressive of all sections in the State. Such a journal would be a Christian reformer. It would not cast out devils by devils, but expel the bad by the infusion of the good. It would help the nations to throw off corrupt and oppressive institutions, as nature helps the forest to throw off its withered foliage by the in-breathing of a new life. Such a journal, to use the language of Emerson, 'would feed its batteries from the central heart of humanity, be the natural leader of British reform, the defender of the exile and the patriot, and give to England a new millennium of beneficent power.'”*

Thus came the *Christian World*, and out of it have evolved other worlds or astroids. Yes, this *Christian World*, now with an enormous circulation, came thundering to the cloudy shores of British ignorance on the billows of a tremendous lie.† Ah, this word “Christian,” invented by reproach at first, but which primitive Christians raised to dignity, has in these last days gone back to reproach again. Some of the worst religious discourses, books, tracts, I know, are called Christian. Many of them should be called Satanian, teeming with devilish sophistries, and inspired with hellish greed.

As to the influence of “THE HOMILIST” upon the mind of the age, who can estimate it? I know it has been extensive. *Two hundred thousand* volumes have been sold. Even suppose that each volume has had five readers, for “THE HOMILIST” passes from hand to hand; when ministers die it goes to the second-hand bookseller, and so on, and to suppose five is a moderate calculation. But the five readers of “THE HOMILIST” are clergymen and ministers of all denominations, and their sermons, when not made up by it, are often suggested and inspired by it. Supposing that each reader has a congregation of even one hundred, its influence would thus extend over a very large multitude.‡ But the amount of influence is not what overawes me, it is its *quality*. Has it been on the whole useful or otherwise? a problem this that shakes one's soul, and overwhelms with the sense of responsibility. I can conscientiously say, and no one “shall rob me of this boasting,” that I never entered on the work from a mercenary inspiration, or conducted it, from the beginning to the close, with gain in view. In this respect, however, it has handsomely rewarded me, for

* See “Homilist,” vol. vi., Page 84.

† This fact was acknowledged by the *Christian World* some years ago, in a somewhat lengthy eulogistic article on me. In the guilty act referred to, the present proprietor had no participation whatever, and would condemn it in language as strong as mine.

‡ Referring to its influence, the numerous works that have sprung out of it, some of which have had a large circulation, should be taken into account. The *Genius of the Gospel*, *Practical Philosopher*, *Commentary on Acts*, *Problemata Mundi*, the *Philosophy of Happiness*, several editions of which have appeared: also the three volumes on *Psalms*, which are now in the press.

which, in the post meridian of my day, I am devoutly thankful. Interest in the work for its own sake has been my moral stimulant right through to the end. Nor have I ever constructed a single sermonic scheme of thought, advocated a single idea, or written a single paragraph for the sake of popularity. For whilst no one appreciates the approving word of generous thoughtfulness more than I do, the popular breath has always been offensive to me. "Popularity," says Chalmers, "is but the hosannahs of a drivelling generation." I pray that whatever this hand has written inconsistent with the ideas and spirit of Jesus of Nazareth my readers may forget, and indulgent Heaven forgive!

Another word in closing concerning its *present position*. Although the generation that hailed it at first has well-nigh dwindled away, those into whose hands it now falls for the first time, experience the same inspiration and mental impulse in its perusal. The letters I receive from new readers in this respect, will bear comparison with the most enthusiastic of those that came to hand during the publication of the First Series. Though time steals elasticity from the limbs, fire from the blood, and buoyancy from the animal spirits, the mind is as yet, thank God, still unimpaired. The mental tree is often more full of sap, buds, blossoms, and fruit, in the evening than in the morning of physical life. My experience is that the more the mind produces the more it can, it grows young with years, and strong with labour. When "THE HOMILIST" was started, and during the first seven volumes, the envious among my brethren (and they were not, and never have been, a few) said and wrote that it could not be maintained, that it was an inspiration I had drawn from some authors of which others were ignorant. This present volume is, I presume, a sufficient answer to that. No honest judge will, I am sure, say, *Coepisti melius quam desinis: Ultima primus cedunt*. "Thou beginnest better than thou endest; the last are inferior to the first." So that I withdraw from "THE HOMILIST," not because it is dying, but because I desire it may receive an increase of life and vigour, by entrusting its conduct to one who has a spirit kindred with its sentiments, and faculties and attainments which have abundantly proved themselves fully competent to carry it on. I would sooner, a thousand times, it should die, than let it pass into the hands of the letterist, the hireling, or the prig, those who would take it up for the sake of profit or popularity. Throughout, it has been true to the programme recorded in the Introduction to every volume; it has not been polemic, or denominational. Heaven forbid that it should ever advocate a denominationalised Gospel, a thing of trade, a hot-bed of sectarian strifes, which malrepresents the Gospel of the Evangelists, and is unquestionably as much the Antichrist of the age as Papal mummeries and theoretical unbeliefs.

Now, with not one particle of unkind feeling to any man on the round earth, with much love for some, with kind wishes for all, I lay down my editorial pen, adding only one word of advice to all who may contribute to these pages in the future, and it shall be in the words of Richter, "*Never write on a subject without having first read yourself full on it; and never read on a subject till you have thought yourself hungry on it.*"

May 28th, 1882.

DAVID THOMAS.

The Preacher's Homiletical Commentary.

HOMILETIC SKETCHES ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

OUR PURPOSE.—Many learned and devout men have gone *Philologically* through this **TEHELIM**, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough **HOMILETIC** treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves; determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

OUR METHOD.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) **THE HISTORY** of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) **ANNOTATIONS** of the passages. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase or allusion that may occur.—(3) **THE ARGUMENT** of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is amongst the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) **THE HOMILETICS** of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately educed, as to suggest such thoughts and indicate such sermonizing methods as may promote the proficiency of modern **pulpit ministrations**.

No. CLXI.

An Invocation for the Truly Desirable in Human Life,

“**LORD, I CRY UNTO THEE, MAKE HASTE UNTO ME,**” &c.—Ps. cxli. 1-10.

HISTORY:—This Psalm—like many others—is ascribed to David, without any conclusive authority. “These four Psalms,” says Delitzsch, “namely, Psalms cxl., cxli., cxlii., cxliii., are interwoven with one another in many ways.” They would seem to authorise the conclusion that they are compositions by the same author about the same time. Perowne calls atten-

tion to the curious fact that De Wette considered the Psalm to be one of the latest, on account of its being a very original and difficult Psalm.

ANNOTATIONS:—Ver. 1. “*Lord, I cry unto Thee : make haste unto me ; give ear unto my voice when I cry unto Thee.*” “Jehovah, I invoke Thee ; hasten to me : give ear to my voice in my calling to Thee.” This verse is entirely made

up of phrases frequently occurring in the Psalms of David. "I invoke Thee (Ps. xvii. 6); Hasten to me (Ps. xxii. 20; lxx. 2; lxxi. 12); Hear my voice (Ps. cxl. 7); In my calling (Ps. iv. 2)"—*Alexander*. "This Psalm is more" says *Delitzsch*, "after the manner of David than really Davidic, for instead of 'Haste Thee to help me,' David always says, 'Haste Thee for my help' (Ps. xxii. 20; xxxviii. 23; xl. 14).

Ver. 2.—"*Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as an incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.*" "Let my prayer avail to Thee as an incense, and the lifting up my hands as a sacrifice in the evening." *Luther*.

Ver. 3.—"*Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips.*" "The Psalmist," says *Canon Cooke*, "had need of special watchfulness over his tongue, lest he should be betrayed into the use of rash and unguarded language. Some render the verse 'Set, O Lord, a watch or a muzzle upon my mouth,' or 'Set, O Lord, a watch before my mouth, a guard upon the door of my lips.'"

Ver. 4.—"*Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.*" "From the prayer for the grace of silence, David passes to a prayer that he may have no fellowship with the wicked. The first prayer has reference to his words, the last to his actions; but as the actions depend on the state of the heart, he prays also that his heart may not be inclined to wickedness. "Eat of their dainties" means, "indulge in their sensual luxurious life." —*Prebendary Young*.

Ver. 5.—"*Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head,*" &c. "This verse," says *Canon Cooke*, "is extremely obscure. The meaning of the first clause seems to be that the reproofs of a friend would be taken as designed in good part, and neither resented nor deemed occasion for mourning. The meaning of the second clause probably is, 'I will continue to encounter the evil deeds of my adversaries with no other weapon than prayer. Compare xix. 28.'"

Ver. 6, 7.—"*When their judges*

are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words, for they are sweet," &c. These verses are as obscure as the two former ones. The translation of Delitzsch does not make the meaning much clearer. "Hurled down upon the sides of the rock are their judges, and they hear my words as welcome. As when one furroweth and breaketh up the

earth, are our bones sowed at the gate of Hades."

Ver. 8, 9, 10.—"*But mine eyes are unto Thee, O Lord, in Thee is my trust,*" &c. "*Leave not my soul destitute,*" Pour not out my soul, this means, do not destroy me. The words, "*nets,*" "*snare,*" "*gins,*" point to the stratagems with which his enemies sought to enthrall and ruin him.

HOMILETICS:—This Psalm is an *invocation for the truly desirable in human life*. What are the truly desirable things here supplicated?

I. DIVINE ATTENTION TO HUMAN ASPIRATIONS. "*Lord, I cry unto Thee, make haste unto me, give ear unto my voice when I cry unto Thee. Let my prayer be set forth before Thee.*" Here is a cry for immediate attention. "*Make haste unto me.*" The prayer is, First: For the immediate attention of God. "*Make haste unto me.*" It is the language of urgency. Distance from God is sinful and perilous, moral nearness to Him is our most urgent duty and deepest need. "*Make haste unto me.*" This really means bring me near to Thee, for He is always close to us in space and sympathy, but we are at a moral distance from Him. The prayer is, Secondly: For the *favourable* attention of God. "*Let my prayer be set forth before Thee.*" "He desired," says Matthew Henry, "that He would be well pleased with him in it, well pleased with his praying, and the lifting up of his hands in prayer, which denotes both the elevation and enlargement of his desire, the outgoings of his hope and expectation, the lifting up of

his hand signifying the lifting up of the heart, and being used instead of lifting up the sacrifices which were heaved and waved before the Lord. Prayer is a spiritual sacrifice, it is the offering up of the soul and its best affections to God. Now he prays that this may be set forth and directed before God as the incense which was daily burnt upon the golden altar, and as the evening sacrifice which he mentions, rather than the morning, perhaps because this was an evening prayer." The spirit of the language seems to be, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable unto Thee, O Lord." Another desirable thing here supplicated is—

II. A COMPLETE GUARDIANSHIP FROM WRONG IN LIFE. First: He prays against wrong in words. "*Set a watch before my mouth,*" &c. Words are not mere sounds, they are often solemn things; they go forth bearing germs either of curse or blessing; and under excitement, when passion runs high, how ready they are to break forth almost unawares. Hence the necessity of this Divine "*watch.*" We must keep our mouths as with a "*bridle.*" Who shall tell the evils that flow in the world every day from unguarded speech? "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity." Secondly: He prays against wrong in practise. "*Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity.*" If the suppliant here supposed that God ever inclines a heart to evil, he makes a sad mistake. God "*tempteth no man.*" What he probably means—anyhow, what he should mean—is, Do not let my heart incline to any evil thing. (1) Let it not be inclined to practise wicked works with wicked men. (2) Let it not be inclined to participate in the pleasures of wicked

men. "*Let me not eat of their dainties.*" Let not their feasts, their banquets, their festive revelries tempt me into their company. Another desirable thing here supplicated is—

III. A READINESS TO RECEIVE RIGHTEOUS REPROOFS. "*Let the righteous smite me,*" &c. The author seems to be suffering under the reproaches of the wicked, and truly the reproaches of the wicked have ever abounded, and are always torturing to the good. Still, conscious of his own moral imperfections he required reproofs, and welcomed them because they would be a kindness to him—they would do him good. Righteous reproof is the kindest of social ministries, all require it. Fawning flatterers are the devil's ministers, in their honied words there is spiritual poison. What greater necessity have all than the society of men who shall reprove, rebuke, exhort? Another desirable thing here supplicated is—

IV. THE MAINTENANCE OF A DEVOUT AND BELIEVING SOUL IN THE MIDST OF OUR ENEMIES. "*For yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.*" Delitzsch renders this—"*For still do I meet their wickedness only with prayer.*" "*When their judges are overthrown in stony places,*" &c. First: Here is *devotion*. The Psalmist means to say that, in spite of the continued machinations of his adversaries, he would have recourse to no other instrument of defence than that of prayer. A truly blessed thing it is to retain this spirit in the midst of enemies, and to fight our battle with spiritual weapons only. Secondly: Here is *confidence*. (1) Confidence in the success of his teaching. "*When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words, for they are sweet.*" Men, however great, are liable to afflictions, and true words spoken then are most likely to

take effect. (2) Confidence in the subjugation of his enemies. "He expresses," says Canon Cooke, "his conviction that although it was the design of his enemies to destroy him and his followers, and to scatter their bones, nevertheless God in His righteous providence, would so defeat their counsels and turn them against themselves, that they should perish by a destruction similar to that which they had prepared for him; whilst he whose eyes had been ever fixed upon the Lord should entirely escape." The other desirable thing here supplicated is—

V. ULTIMATE DELIVERANCE FROM ALL ENEMIES. "*But mine eyes are unto Thee, O God, the Lord, in Thee is my trust,*" &c. The Psalmist confidently believes that God will so frustrate the designs of his enemies that they will perish with the very destruction they intended for him. How sage and suggestive are the words of Matthew Henry: "All that are bound over to God's justice are held in the cords of their own iniquity. But let me at the same time obtain a discharge. The entangling and ensnaring of the wicked sometimes prove the escape and enlargement of the righteous."

CONCLUSION: Ponder well the truly desirable things in human life as here suggested, and by prayer and effort you will pass through life more than a conqueror.

"What e'er is good to wish, ask that of Heaven,
 Though it be what thou can'st not hope or see;
 Pray to be perfect, though material leaven
 Forbid the spirit so on earth to be;
 But if for any wish thou darest not pray,
 Then pray to God to cast that wish away."

Hartly Coleridge.

Sermonic Saplings.

STIMULATING MEN TO BENEFICENT ACTIONS.

“BUT THANKS BE TO GOD,” &c.—2 Cor. viii. 16-24.



THE verses under notice present to us the subject of stimulating men to efforts of beneficence, and three remarks are suggested concerning this occupation:—

I. It is a work that REQUIRES THE HIGHEST ORDER OF CHRISTIAN MEN. We find here that not only Paul employs himself in it with all his loving earnestness and logical power, but he engages Titus also, and a “brother” with him of such distinction that his “*praise is in the Gospel throughout all the Churches.*” To excite men to beneficent enterprises is pre-eminently a Christian work. Christianity is the mother of all philanthropic labours and institutions. Christian piety is a fountain whence all the myriad streams of human beneficence that circulate through all the districts of human life proceed. To stimulate this beneficence in men is the highest ministry on earth, and for it men of the most distinguished character and faculty are required. No man is too great for it, and but few men are equal to its successful discharge. Another remark suggested concerning this occupation is—

II. It is a work DESERVING THE GRATITUDE OF ALL. Paul refers to, First: The gratitude of those who had been excited to beneficent efforts. “*But thanks be to*

God which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you." It is implied that Titus conferred on them an immense favour in stimulating them to generous deeds. No man can render us a greater service than by taking us out of ourselves and inspiring us with a genuine concern for the interests of others. It is not he who gives me a good thing, but who stimulates me to *do* a good thing, that is my greatest benefactor, for it is "more blessed to give than to receive." In giving we become God-like—and, therefore, we ought to thank the man most devoutly who evokes within us the spirit of true charity. Instead of endeavouring to avoid appeals to our benevolence, we should hail them and thank our Maker for them. Paul refers to, Secondly: The gratitude of those who have effected the excitement. Paul says, "*Thanks be to God which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.*" (1) There is no office higher in itself than this. This is the work for which Christ came into the world, the work for which He established the Christian ministry. The aim and tendency of the Gospel are to drown the selfish *ego* in the sunny tide of universal charity. The love of Christ constrained men to feel that they should not henceforth live to themselves. (2) There is no office more useful than this. Success in this means ruin in all that is ruinous to souls in human history, ruin to selfishness, and all its fiendish brood. Well, therefore, might those who are engaged in such a work thank God for the distinguishing honour to which they have been called. Paul says nothing here about the gratitude of those on whom the excited beneficence has bestowed its favours, the beneficiaries. He seems to take it for granted that they ought and would be thankful; that

they ought to be admits of no doubt, but that they always are cannot be asserted. Ingratitude, alas, is one of the reigning sins in human life. Another remark suggested concerning his occupation is—

III. It is a work EXPOSED TO THE SUSPICIONS OF WORLDLY MEN. The apostle seems to have been afraid that the contributions that would flow from stimulating the beneficence of the Corinthian Church, would occasion the allegation that they were participating in them, and so obtaining some personal advantage. Hence to guard against the possibility, he gets the Churches to choose from amongst them some men of the best reputation, whom he calls “*messengers of the Churches*,” and Titus, and perhaps Luke, in the administration of the charity, and thus “*providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men*.” Dishonest men have existed in all ages, and the more dishonest men are, the more suspicious. Paul here guards himself against all scandalous imputations. He had great respect for his own reputation, so much so, that one at times in reading these epistles, is well nigh astonished that a man so great in nature and sublime in character, should think so much about the opinions of others.

GENUINE BENEFICENCE.

(No. I.)

“MOREOVER, BRETHREN, WE DO YOU TO WIT OF THE GRACE OF GOD,” &c.—2 Cor. viii. 1-9.

The subject of these words is genuine beneficence, and they suggest certain general truths concerning it.

I. That all GENUINE BENEFICENCE IN MAN IS FROM GOD.
 “Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of (we make

known to you) *the grace of God.*" All that is loving and generous in all moral beings is from one source, and that is God. He is the primal Font whence all flows. Wherever you see love, in young or old, rich or poor, cultured or rude, you see an emanation from and a reflection of the Eternal. As you may see the ocean in a dewdrop, you may see God in every throb of affection in human souls. Another general truth concerning genuine beneficence in these words is—

II. That in some men it is MORE STRONGLY DEVELOPED THAN IN OTHERS. According to Paul the "*Churches of Macedonia*" displayed it in a remarkable degree. It would seem from what Paul says concerning the beneficence of the Macedonian Churches that it was, First: Self-sacrificing. "*How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.*" It would seem from this that they could ill-afford—as the phrase is—to render any help in the way of property to others, and yet their contributions "*Abounded unto the riches of their liberality.*" The beneficence was, Secondly: Spontaneous. "*They were willing of themselves.*" They were not pressed into it by outward appeals. The only pressure was from love within. The beneficence was, Thirdly: Earnest. "*Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift.*" Instead of giving because they were besought by others to do so, they themselves besought the reception of their gifts. They might have presented plausible reasons for withholding their contributions to this charity. They might have pleaded distance, and said, Jerusalem is a long way off, and charity begins at home. They might have pleaded lack of personal

knowledge, and have said we are utterly unacquainted with any of these saints at Jerusalem, or they might have pleaded their own affliction or poverty. But instead of that, they earnestly seized the opportunity to render what help they could. The beneficence was, Fourthly: Religious. "*And this they did not as we hoped, but first gave their own souls for the Lord and unto us, by the will of God.*" "This means," says a modern expositor, "of course that they had done what was far beyond his hopes. And here the point lies in the fact that they gave not their money only, but themselves, their time, thought, energy primarily to Christ as their Lord, and then to the apostle as His minister. And this they had done because they allowed the will of God to work upon their will." Consecration of self to God is at once the cause and virtue of all our gifts to men. Unless we give ourselves to God, all our gifts to men are morally worthless. Another general truth concerning genuine beneficence in these words is—

III. Those in whom it is most strongly developed MIGHT BE URGED AS AN EXAMPLE TO OTHERS. Paul here holds up the beneficence of the Macedonians as an example to stimulate the charity of the Corinthians. It would seem that the Church at Corinth had, through the influence of Titus, commenced a subscription for the poor at Jerusalem, and that Titus was about to return in order to obtain larger contributions; and the charity of the Macedonian Churches Paul quotes as an example in order to help forward the work. His argument seems to be this, You have the advantages of the Churches at Macedonia in many things, you "*abound in everything,*" you are wealthy, they are poor; your endowments are greater than theirs, your "*faith, and*

utterance, and knowledge," and "in your love to us;" this being so, "*See that ye abound in this grace, also.*" see that you excel in your contributions to this charity. It is wise and well to hold up the good example of others to stimulate men to a holy emulation. The good deeds of other men are amongst the divine forces to purify and ennoble our own characters. The other general truth here concerning genuine beneficence is—

IV. The highest example of it we have IN THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST. "*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,*" &c. Christ is the Supreme Model of philanthropy. First: His philanthropy was self-sacrificing. "*Though He was rich yet for your sakes He became poor.*" Observe: (1) He was rich in material wealth before He came into the world. It is of material wealth that the apostle is speaking. Observe: (2) His existence on earth was that of material poverty. "*The foxes have holes,*" &c. Observe: (3) He passed voluntarily from one stage into another. "*For your sakes He became poor.*" Of all the myriads of men that have appeared on this earth, and that will appear, He alone had the choosing of His circumstances, and He chose poverty. Secondly: His philanthropy aimed supremely at the promotion of spiritual wealth. "*That ye through His poverty might be rich.*" Rich spiritually. Great is the difference between spiritual wealth and material. (1) The one is absolutely valuable, the other is not. (2) The one is essential to happiness, the other is not. (3) The one is within the reach of all, the other is not.

GENUINE BENEFICENCE.

(No. II.)

“AND HEREIN I GIVE MY ADVICE,” &c.—2 Cor. viii. 10-15.

In these verses there is a continuation of the subject presented in the preceding ones, viz., genuine beneficence. And there are three further remarks suggested concerning this all-important subject.

I. It is the EMBODYING OF THE BENEFICENT DESIRE IN CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS. “*Herein I give my advice* (judgment), *for this is expedient for you who have begun before* (who were the first to make a beginning), *not only to do but also to be forward a year ago. Now, therefore, perform* (complete) *the doing of it, that as there was a readiness to will so there may be a performance* (completion) *also out of that which ye have.*” They had shown the will to contribute, for they had “*a year ago*” commenced their subscriptions. Now Paul exhorts them to go on and complete the work. “*As there was a readiness to will so there may be a performance.*” The mere generous will is good in itself, but is not enough; it requires to be embodied in deeds. Every good desire requires embodiment. First: For our *own* sake. It is only as our best desires are translated into deeds that they give solidity and strength to our character. In words and sighs they die away, they are like the morning dew. A good desire in itself is like the raindrop on the leaf of the tree, it may excite admiration as it glistens like a diamond in the sun, but it is soon exhaled, and probably does no good to the tree. But when embodied in a generous deed it is like the raindrop that penetrates the roots, and contributes

some portion of strength to all the fibres. A charity-sermon delivered with the eloquence of a Chalmers may excite in the congregation the beneficent idea, almost to a passion, but unless that passion takes the form of a self-denying act it evaporates, and leaves the congregation in a worse state than the preacher found it. Every good desire requires embodiment, Secondly: For the sake of *others*. It is generous deeds that bless the world. They go where ideas cannot penetrate, into the hearts and consciences of men; they work silently and salutarily as the sunbeam.

II. The contributions of beneficence are only VIRTUOUS AS THEY SPRING FROM A GENEROUS DESIRE. "*For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*" The doctrine is this, that the disposition of the heart, not the doings of the hand, constitute the essence of moral character. This is the divine method of estimating human conduct. "The Lord judgeth not as man judgeth," &c. The motive is the soul of the deed. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Do not judge the desire by the effort, but judge the effort put forth by the desire. The poor widow would have made munificent contributions, but she could only give a "mite," but in that mite there was more value than in all the amount in the temple exchequer. Some have the means to do good and not the heart, and some have the heart but not the means. The former are grubs in the universe, the latter are angels. There are deeds done *in* the body, seen of God infinitely more numerous and essentially more valuable in most cases than deeds done *by* the body.

III. The contributions of others cannot SUPERSEDE THE OBLIGATION OF OURS, BUT MAY SUPPLEMENT THEIR DEFICIENCIES. (1) It is not a substitute. "*For I mean not that other men be eased and ye burdened.*" It behoves every man to contribute to the extent of his riches, to the good of others. If one man gives a thousand it does not relieve me from my obligation to contribute what I can. (2) It is a supplement. "*But by an equality that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want.*" It is the duty of all to contribute. Some have the ability to contribute a hundred times the amount of others; let their large sums go to supplement the deficiencies of their poorer brethren, so that there may be "*an equality.*" Thus the old Scripture will be illustrated, that "*He that had gathered much had nothing over, and he that had gathered little had no lack.*"

THE CENSURES ON MINISTERS AND THE WAY TO TREAT THEM.

"NOW I, PAUL, MYSELF BESEECH YOU," &c.—2 Cor. x. 1, 2.

Throughout the whole of these epistles the writer reveals various moods of minds. He is alternately mild and severe, tender and rigorous, menacing and wooing. A considerable modification in his tone begins with this chapter and runs on to the tenth verse of the thirteenth chapter, probably the cause of the change was some fresh information that some messenger had just brought him from Corinth, information concerning evils still prevalent amongst them,

and especially concerning the unkind and unjust remarks which those teachers who were envious of him made about him personally.

These verses may be regarded as illustrating the *censures on ministers and the way to treat them*.

I. THE CENSURES ON MINISTERS. In the verses there are four faults which Paul's enemies at Corinth seem to have alleged against him. The first refers to his *personal appearance*, the second to his *speech*, the third to his *lack of courage*, and the fourth to his *temporal deportment*. As to the first he says, "*Who in presence am base among you.*" His bodily presence they considered weak. Paul, instead of being in body full grown, symmetrical and commanding, was probably diminutive and deformed. Chrysostom (with what authority I know not) says his stature was low, his figure crooked, and his head bald. Nothing indicates a baser and a profaner mind than to notice, still less to censure, mere physical defects. Strange to say, though the defective person is conscious that he is utterly unaccountable in the matter, few things are more painful to him than to have them ill-naturedly remarked upon. As to his speech, it is indicated in the tenth verse that they regarded it as "contemptible." Paul did not practice the graces of Grecian oratory, and perhaps his voice lacked music. What of that? In his case the transcendent doctrines he proclaimed should have been sufficient to have drawn the hearer's attention from any infirmities of language. The matter, not the manner, should have been attended to. But his speech was not contemptible. Read his discourse to the Athenians, his defence before Agrippa, and recollect that the inhabitants of Lyconia regarded him as Mercury,

the god of eloquence. As to his lack of courage, they said, "*being absent*," he was "*bold*," but "*present*," he was not so. As if they had said, how bold he is in his letters when away from us, but how cowardly he would be in our presence. It is his cowardice that prevents him from visiting us, and thus fulfilling his promise. No charge could be more false than this; a braver man than Paul, perhaps, never lived. He did not count his "life dear unto him." As to his temporal deportment, they implied that he lived a worldly life, that he "*walked according to the flesh*," that he was ruled by a carnal policy, and pursued his own advantage. Such are the censures on Paul, and such censures on ministers in every age are by no means uncommon. Some find fault with ministers because they are not good looking, some because they are not eloquent in speech, some because they are not sufficiently fearless, some because their deportment in life is not sufficiently spiritual. Some of these censures, alas, are too just in relation to ministers in general, but utterly unjust when pronounced on Paul. The verses illustrate—

II. THE RIGHT TREATMENT OF SUCH CENSURES. In what spirit did Paul treat his unjust censors? "*Now I, Paul, myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ*." His appeal here to the "*meekness and gentleness of Christ*" implies, First: That Christ's gentle temper was *universally acknowledged among them*. None of them would dispute it, or could; it was patent to all. Gentleness characterised the life of Christ from the manger to the Mount of Olives, whence He ascended to the heavens. He did not "cause His voice to be heard in the street," &c. His appeal denotes, Secondly: A belief that Christ's gentle temper was the

most *effective argument to subdue hostility*. Love alone can destroy anger, moral gentleness hush the waves of animosity. Thus Christ taught, thus He acted. When the Roman ruffians with swords and staves entered the garden in order to inflict violence upon Him without touching them He hurled them to the ground. How? Not by force or miracle, or argument, but by the majestic influence of His gentleness, the electric shock of a moral temper charged with celestial love.

Self-Estimation, Vindication and Exultation.

“FOR I SUPPOSE I WAS NOT A WHIT BEHIND THE VERY CHIEFEST APOSTLES,” &c.—2 Cor. xi. 5-19.

AMONGST several minor matters implied and expressed in this passage there are three subjects that stand out prominently: Paul's self-estimation as an apostle, his self-vindication as an apostle, and his self-exultation as an apostle.

I. His self-ESTIMATION as an apostle. “*For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge, but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things,*” &c. Paul's self-estimation here is not an estimation of his natural, or acquired ability or of his moral character, but the estimation of his apostleship. As an apostle he claimed to be equal to the very best, “*the very chiefest.*” If he meant by the “*chiefest*” Peter, James and John, certainly his estimate was not too high; but if he meant those in Corinth who claimed to be his superior, his estimate was infinitely too low. First: He claimed equality with the best, notwith-

standing his apparent disadvantages. "*Though I be rude in speech.*" Not only did his rivals in Corinth regard him as rude in speech, but he himself seemed to have the impression. He evidently did not study the graces of rhetoric, he could not perhaps compete even with Apollos; notwithstanding this, he felt he was not a "*whit behind*" any of them. Secondly: He claimed equality with the best, conscious that they had sufficient evidence to justify the claim. "*We have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things;*" that is, in everything we have made it manifest to you ward. As if he had said, I am not speaking to persons who are ignorant of my history, who have no means of knowing my apostolic abilities and spirit, and your own consciences must tell you that in claiming to be equal to the "*very chiefest apostles*" I am justified. No one who is acquainted with the life and labours of Paul can doubt for a moment the justice of his estimation of himself. The great majority of the race form no intelligent estimate of themselves, whilst others form an estimate which is too high or too low. In the former case they are puffed up with a disgusting vanity, in the latter they are cast down with an enervating sadness. Notice—

II. His SELF-VINDICATION as an apostle. "*Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the Gospel of God freely?*" &c. Perhaps his enemies at Corinth charged him with greed, because he had taken money from other Churches, though he had not done so at Corinth; and perhaps his friends at Corinth would charge him with pride because he had not sought contributions from them. The one would regard him as mean, the

other as contemptuous. Here he vindicates himself from both imputations. He had not taken money from them for his services, not because it was wrong to do so, for the "labourer is worthy of his hire," and it was ordained that they who "preached the Gospel should live of the Gospel;" nor because he did not feel the highest interest in them, on the contrary. He had accepted assistance from other Churches, but was "*chargeable to no man*" amongst them, and kept himself from being "*burdensome*," and was determined to continue thus independent. Why? Here is the reason; not because he did not love them, but the reverse. "*Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth.*" The Philippians had sent supplies to him twice at Thessalonica, and he had accepted their kindness; but of the Corinthians he neither sought or accepted anything. It is not improbable that some of the Corinthians were jealous of the preference shown by Paul to the Macedonians in receiving their gifts. He seeks to disabuse their minds of this by assuring them that no such preference existed; but that he loved them, "*God knoweth.*" Why, then, did he act so independently of their secular help? "*But what I do that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory they may be found even as we.*" His enemies, the false teachers, had perhaps boasted of their own disinterestedness, and taunted him with meanness in taking money from the Churches. Hence from Corinth Paul never received, sought, or desired any gifts for his labours. Thus he forgoes all their assistance, all claims on their gifts, and deprives those whom he here calls, "*false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles*

of Christ," of the slightest ground of arrogating to themselves any superiority over him as to disinterestedness of labour. What is said of them here deserves notice in passing. They are impostors. As impostors (1) They worked deceitfully. "*Deceitful workers,*" cunning and crafty. (2) They worked hypocritically. "*Transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.*" They assume a character that does not belong to them, in this they worked Satanically, "*and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*" The devil does not work under the garb of a foe, but of a friend; not of a fiend, but of a saint; his forms are not hideous, but attractive. Notice—

III. His self-EXULTATION as an apostle. "*I say again, Let no man think me a fool, if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little.*" Thus he pursues a boasting style on to verse nineteen. I cannot do better than quote the words of F. W. Robertson, concerning Paul's boasting. "Some cannot understand the feeling which would prompt such expressions as these. Shallow men would call it egotism, vanity, folly; as if egotism consisted only in speaking of one's self; as if, when the personal pronoun was omitted, the egotism ceased; as if it were vanity in Paul to assert the fact of his innocence, when his whole life was one long martyrdom for Christ. True Christian modesty is not the being ignorant of what we are, neither does it consist in affecting ignorance. If a man has genius, he knows he has it; if a man is more powerful than others, he knows his strength. If a man is falsely charged with theft, there is no vanity in his indignantly asserting that he has been honest in all his life long. Christian modesty consists rather in this—in having

set before us a sublime standard of what is high and great, and pure, and good, so that we feel how far we are from attaining to that. Thus we can understand him, when he says he is not '*behind the chiefest of the apostles,*' while he yet says in another place that he is the '*chief of sinners.*' Foolish men cannot comprehend this; they cannot understand how a Christian man can simply and undisguisedly say what he knows to be true of himself in reply to accusations—that his honour is unsullied, his chastity untainted, his truth indisputable; that though rude in speech, he is not so in knowledge—and yet how the same man can go into the secret sanctuary of his closet before God, and—alone with his Maker—bow himself in deepest self-abasement, and cry, '*Unclean, unclean!*' "

True Humility.

"TRUE humility calls no man master, and seems to worldly men to be pride, but it is only its deep deference to God that enables it to set man in his own lowly place. True humility prefers mercy to sacrifice, does good and is silent, bears suffering and is patient, rises above schoolmen, priest and tradition, looks to Christ, sits at His feet, and learns only from Him. True humility will bid the priest, the Church, the minister, and the schoolmen, remain—as Abraham his servants at the bottom of the mount—while it rises to the loftiest crag of that mount, and deals alone with God, and holds communion with Him only. Truly humility counts holiness far more splendid than robes and phylacteries, prefers beneficence to ceremony, lives a divine life, and is not satisfied with merely talking about it and praising it. It wears not a hair-cloth shirt, nor whines when it speaks, nor puts on a sour and repulsive countenance, nor fancies that God can only be approached, and religion spoken of, in sepulchral tones."

Germes of Thought.

THE PREACHER'S FINGER-POST.

The Vital in Character, Foolish in Judgment, Dishonourable in Conduct, and Supreme in Obligation.

“LET SUCH AN ONE THINK THIS,” &c. 2 Cor. x. 11-18.

There are four points in these verses that are worthy of meditation:—a trait of character that is vital, a judgment of self that is foolish, a ministerial conduct that is dishonourable, and moral obligations that are supreme. Here is—

I. A TRAIT OF CHARACTER THAT IS VITAL. “*Let such an one think this, that such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present.*” The element of character which the apostle here claims for himself is *thorough and inflexible honesty*. It would seem that his enemies either asserted or implied that he would

not say in their presence what he stated in his epistles, that he would be too cowardly or conciliatory for this. He denies this, and declares that when he met them face to face they would find him consistent, and in strict accord with his letters. A good man is *incarnate honesty*, he is not honest here and dishonest there, not honest at one time and dishonest at another, but uniformly the same, the same before princes or paupers, foes or friends, in the presence of men or in their absence. A splendid attribute of character this, albeit rare; rare not only amongst the worldling,

but the so-called religious, and even amongst professional ministers of the Gospel. Truculency and time-serving are, alas, rampant everywhere; they are a cancer that is eating up the life of the social body. Oh, for the honesty of Paul! Here is—

II. A JUDGMENT OF SELF THAT IS FOOLISH. “*For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.*”

There seems a blast of satire in the first sentences. They had represented Paul as cowardly. With oblique irony he says, “*We dare not make ourselves of the number.*” As if he had said, “Of course we cannot compare ourselves with men of your transcendent courage. “Satire is often a

serviceable element in conveying truth; it cuts its way into the heart, and makes the nerves of self-conceit quiver with anguish. But the point to be noticed is contained in the last clause of the verse, that is their foolish *test of self-judgment*, and that test is the character of others. They measure “*themselves by themselves*,” this, Paul says, is “*not wise.*” Indeed, nothing can be more unwise than for a man to make the character of another the standard by which to try his own. First: Because it would lead to a wrong estimate of self. The best of men are imperfect, and conformity to them would leave us far from what we ought to be. There is only one perfect standard, that is the character of Christ. Secondly: Because it will exert an influence that is pernicious. It will nurse vanity

in the soul. The man or the woman who is conspicuously vain, you may rest assured, have their settled society among those who are inferior to themselves. They feel their superiority, and pride themselves in it. On the other hand, no atmosphere is so inimical to the growth of vanity as the society of those who are in all respects greater than ourselves: the presence of the great humbles us. Now vanity is a bad thing. A vain man loses all motive for self-improvement, and his society is so offensive to others, that his influence for good is *nil*. Here is—

III. A CONDUCT OF MINISTERS THAT IS DISHONOURABLE. “*We will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.*” “The words imply,” says

a modern writer, “of course, that his opponents were doing this. He refers in it to the concordat established between himself and Barnabas on the one hand, and Peter, James, and John on the other, to which he refers in Gal. ii. 9. He had not transgressed the terms of that concordat by thrusting himself on a Church which had been founded by one of the apostles of the circumcision. He had gone, step by step, seeking ‘fresh fields and pastures new,’ till he had reached Corinth, as at present the farthest limit of his work.” The teachers at Corinth who were disparaging and calumniating Paul had gone into his “*measure*” or province of labour; they had gone to the Church at Antioch, which he had founded, and to the Church at Galatia, now they were stirring up strife at Corinth. They did not break up fresh

ground. Paul did so everywhere ; his commission was to the whole Gentile world ; therefore he did not “ *stretch* ” himself beyond his province ; therefore he did not “ *boast of things* ” without his “ *measure*,” or of other men’s labours. The conduct which the apostle here deprecates is pursued by some ministers of the Gospel in these times, and that in two ways. First : In *interfering in other men’s spheres of labour*. This iniquity abounds in England. Churches and chapels are erected in fields of labour usefully occupied by others. In a sphere of labour which we occupied for upwards of thirty years, a man came, even of the same denomination, and put up a church within five minutes’ walk of our own. What would Paul have said to this ? Such conduct is not only unworthy of Christianity, but de-

grades it, and checks its progress. This conduct is pursued, Secondly : In *appropriating other ministers’ sermons*, and taking credit, and even boasting of their own wonderful discourses. Here we have—

IV. MORAL OBLIGATIONS THAT ARE SUPREME. “ *He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord*,” &c. There are two cardinal duties here. First : Glorifying in the Lord. This implies, (1) Supreme appreciation. We can only glory in that which we value. Who in worth is to be compared unto the Lord ? Whose moral *character* is comparable to His ? Whose works are comparable to His ? The best characters and the best works of men, what are they compared to His ? What are they in which to glory ? This implies, (2) Soul-appropriation. As a rule, we can only “ *glory* ” in that which belongs to us.

He who can say, "The Lord is my portion" may well glory. Another duty here is, Secondly: Seeking the approval of the Lord. "*For not he that com-*

mendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." To please Him is our highest duty and sublimest happiness.

Paul's Avowal of his Advantages and his History of his Trials.

"I SPEAK AS CONCERNING REPROACH," &c.—2 Cor. xi. 21-33.

THE two subjects for thought that stand out conspicuously in these verses, are Paul's manly avowal of his distinguished advantages, and his historic sketch of his extraordinary trials.

I. HIS MANLY AVOWAL OF HIS DISTINGUISHED ADVANTAGES. There are three advantages which he here touches upon, First: His superior character. "*I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak.*" Hitherto I have spoken of myself as if all the disparaging things you have said of me were true. The idea of Paul's language here seems to be

this, "I have been speaking of reproach or disgrace, as if I was weak, *i.e.*, as if I was disposed to admit as true all that has been said of me, as reproachful or disgraceful, all that has been said of my want of qualifications for the office, of my want of talent, my dignity of character, my folly. In all this I have been speaking ironically. I am superior to all; I am not ignorant, but learned; I am not foolish, but wise; not greedy, but generous; not proud, but humble; not ignoble, but dignified." How far his character transcended that of his traducers, history shows.

Another advantage he touches upon is, Secondly : His superior ancestry. "*Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.*" His traducers, the false teachers, were, it would seem, Jews, probably boasted of their descent, and certainly implied that Paul was a mere Hellenistic Jew, born at Tarsus. If they gloried in their descent, so could he ; the blood of Abraham quivered in his veins, a lineal descendant of the man who wrestled with Jehovah and prevailed, an Israelite. Another advantage he touches upon is, Thirdly : His superior apostleship. "*Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more.*" They called themselves "*ministers of Christ,*" and belonged, perhaps, to the party in the Corinthian Church, who said they were "of

Christ," Christites. But he was more an Apostle of Christ than they were. Of this he was conscious. In touching this Paul says, "*I speak as a fool,*" or as one beside myself. Here his great soul seems to flash out in the fire of indignant irony. There is an egotism here, say some. True, but it is a just, manly, necessary egotism. The other subject that stands out conspicuously in these verses is—

II. HIS HISTORIC SKETCH OF HIS EXTRAORDINARY TRIALS. He was scourged "*five times*" in "*prisons frequent,*" and in "*deaths oft,*" thrice "*beaten with rods,*" once "*stoned,*" "*thrice suffered shipwrecks,*" in "*perils in the sea,*" and on land, midst foes and friends, in the "*wilderness*" and in cities, tried by "*weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and naked-*

ness." Besides all this, he refers to the trials that came "*daily*" upon him in "*the care of all the Churches.*" The Churches were dear to his heart, and all the dissensions, heresies, unchastities, immoralities, that appeared from time to time in the Churches would carry anguish into his heart. Why he should refer in the last verse to the event that happened at Damascus, when he was let down "*through a window in a basket,*" has been a puzzle to commentators. But as it was amongst his first trials as an Apostle, it, perhaps, made the greatest impression on his mind.

The trials here sketched indicate several things, First: *The mysteriousness of God's procedure with His servants.* One might have thought that the man inspired with supreme love to Him, and receiving a commission

from Him, involving the salvation of souls, would have had his way made clear and safe, and even pleasant for him; that in his path no enemy should appear, no peril should threaten, no pain should be endured, that all things would be propitious, that he who embarked in such an enterprise as Paul's, would sail in a bark absolutely secure, under a sky without a cloud, with every billow and every breeze propitious. But not so. The more important the Divine work entrusted to a man, and the more faithful he is in its discharge, the more trials will embarrass and distract him. For an explanation of this we must await the great explaining day. The trials here sketched indicate, Secondly: *The unconquerableness of Christly love in the soul.* What stimulated Paul to embark in such an enterprise as this? What

urged him on through innumerable difficulties and dangers? What bore him up under distressing and ever-thickening trials? Here is the answer, "The love of Christ constraineth me." This is the love that is unconquerable, and all-conquering, the love that makes the true hero. The trials here sketched indicate, Thirdly: *The indelibility of the impressions which trials produce.* The trials in this long catalogue, so varied and tremendous, had long since transpired, but they were fresh in Paul's memory. Each one stood before the eye of his memory in living reality. It is a law in our nature that our trials make a deeper impression on us than our mercies. Why should this be so? Because they are the exceptions, not the rule. The trials here sketched indicate, Fourthly: *The*

blessedness which the memory of trials rightly endured produces. In Paul's case it did two things: (1) It generated sympathy with the woes of others. "*Who is weak and I am not weak? who is offended and I burn not?*" No man can sympathise with the trials of others, unless he has passed through trials himself. The sufferings that Christ endured qualified Him to sympathise with the woes of the world. He who hungers for sympathy in his sufferings will go in vain to the man who has never suffered. The memory of suffering in Paul's case did another thing: (2) It inspired the soul with true rejoicing. "*If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern my infirmities.*" The reminiscence of the trials he had endured, the foes he had encountered, the perils he had braved in the

cause of Christ, were now for him subjects for congratulation and glorying. They had exerted such a beneficent influence on his character, and were endured in such a noble cause, that he rejoiced in

them. In declaring all this Paul makes a solemn appeal for its truth. "*The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.*"

Paul's State of Mind Concerning his Past and Prospective Connection with the Church at Corinth.

"I AM BECOME A FOOL IN GLORYING," &c.—2 Cor. xii. 11-21.

THESE verses throw light upon Paul's state of mind, both in relation to his past and prospective connection with the Corinthian Church.

I. His state of mind concerning his PAST connection with the Corinthian Church. First: He remembers the ill-treatment which forced him to speak with apparent boastfulness of himself. "*I am become a fool (I am become foolish) in glorying, ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you; for in nothing am I*

behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing." Dean Plumptre's remarks tend to illustrate Paul's state of mind. "The verse opens with a somewhat thrilling abruptness, 'I am become insane—it was you who compelled me.' The words are partly ironical, partly speak of an impatient consciousness, that what he had been saying would seem to give colour to the opprobrious epithets that had been flung at him. The passage on which we now enter, and of which we

may think as begun after a pause, is remarkable for the production in a compressed form of most of the topics, each with its characteristic phrase, on which he had before dwelt. The violence of the storm is over, the sky is not yet clear, and we still hear the mutterings of the receding thunder. He remembers once more that he has been called insane, that he has been taunted with commending himself, that he has been treated as '*nothing*' in comparison with those Apostles extraordinary, who were setting themselves up as his rivals. "I," he says, with an emphatic stress on the pronoun, 'ought to have had no need for this painful self-assertion. You ought to have acknowledged my labour and my love for you.' Secondly: He remembers the work which he had done amongst them, and which raised him above all the

apostles. "*Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.*" Paul possessed supernatural power, and wrought supernatural results in their midst. Of this they must have been aware, and could not deny. Referring to his ministry, there he says, elsewhere, "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. ii. 4). In this respect he was, therefore, not only not behind "*the very chiefest apostles,*" such as Peter, James, and John, but immeasurably superior to the false teachers, his traducers. Can a man who was conscious of such power as this, be charged with egotism in proclaiming it in the presence of his detractors? Does he become "*a fool in glory-*

ing?” Nay, nay, a wise man. Thirdly: He remembers that for his labours amongst them he had not sought any temporal assistance. “*For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other Churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong.*” Probably it had been insinuated by his traducers, that Paul cared less for the Churches at Corinth than for those at Macedonia, because he had maintained his independence, and sought no gifts. He seems to intimate that this was some disadvantage to them, and he asks their forgiveness. And, indeed, it seems to me it is a spiritual disadvantage to any Church not to contribute to the support of its minister; for there is more good in giving than in receiving. Notice—

II. His state of mind concerning his PROSPEC-

TIVE connection with the Corinthian Church. First: Here are loving resolves. “*Behold the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you; for I seek not your's, but you.*” We have no record of a second visit, but this does not disprove its existence; for, no doubt, there is more omitted of Paul's history than recorded. He resolves that in this third visit he would not be burdensome to them, but pursue the same conduct of independency towards them as he had done all along, taking nothing from them, but give to them. “*I seek not your's, but you.*” Act as a father generally acts towards his “*children,*” “*lay up*” for them, not they for him, and gladly spend and be spent for them. And all this, whether they love him or not. What noble generosity breathes

in all these resolves. Secondly: Here are painful memories. "*I did not burden you, nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.*" This, again, is ironical. You say that although I made no demand on your purses for myself, that I want a collection for the "saints," and that out of that collection I will craftily take what I want. He seems to fling back upon them their accusation of his being crafty, and catching them "*with guile.*" "*Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you? I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? Walked we not in the same spirit? Walked we not in the same steps?*" Nay, neither they or he had ever sponged on them, but had maintained their high independency. In saying this, he deprecates the idea that he was amenable

to them for his conduct, but to God only. "*Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? We speak before God in Christ; but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.*" Thus, in the prospect of visiting Corinth once more, most painful memories of his traducers arose. Thirdly: Here are anxious apprehensions. "*For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not.*" His tender nature seemed to shrink at the supposition of the old evils still rampant there. "*Lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults.*" He was too brave a man to dread perils, or toils, or death. "None of these things moved" him, but from such evils as "*strifes,*" "*envyings,*" "*wraths,*" "*backbitings,*" "*whisper-*

ings," "swellings," "tumults," "uncleanness," "fornication," "lasciviousness," his pure and pious nature shrank with horror. The great thing to be dreaded is sin. It is the "abominable thing," the soul-destroying devil of humanity.

CONCLUSION:—First: Do not *judge any minister by the opinions of his brethren*. Paul was the best and the most useful of men: but the opinion of his brethren was that he was the worst and the most pernicious. Secondly: Do not *cease in your endeavours to*

benefit men because they calumniate you. The worst men require your services most, the "whole need no physician." Thirdly: Do not *sponge upon your congregation*. Do not seek their's, but them. Do not study how to increase your pews, rents, swell your collections and offertories, but how to increase the spiritual intelligence, freedom, and true blessedness of the people. Fourthly: Do not *cower before anything but sin*. Sin is the Apollyon of the universe.

Paul's Epistolary Farewell to the Corinthians.

"THIS IS THE THIRD TIME I AM COMING TO YOU," &c.—2 Cor. xiii. 1-14.

This chapter concludes Paul's letters to the Corinthians. There is no evidence that he wrote a word to them after this. The letters had evidently been a task to him. To a man of his tender nature no duty could be more

painful than that of censure and reproach. Nothing but a sense of loyalty to the holiness of Christianity could have urged him to it. No doubt he felt a burden rolled from his heart, and a freer breath, when he

dictated the last sentence. He was now to visit them for the third time, determined to execute the discipline that might be required, earnestly hoping at the same time that when he was once more amongst them, the necessity for such discipline would not appear. In this concluding chapter we find words of warning, exhortation, prayer, comfort, and benediction.

I. Words of WARNING. He warns them of a chastisement which he was determined to inflict upon all offenders, both in doctrine and cognate, against the Gospel of Christ. Four things are suggested here concerning the discipline he intended to prosecute. First: The discipline would be righteous. "*In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.*" Here is a rule quoted and endorsed by Christ (Matt. xviii. 16), an action

of the Jewish law, and a natural dictate of judicial policy. What he probably means to say, is, I will not chastise any without proper evidence. I will not trust to rumours or surmises, I will *test* every case myself, so that justice shall be done. Therefore, the true need not fear, the false alone need apprehend. Secondly: The discipline would be rigorous. "*I told you before, and foretell you as if I were present, the second time: and being absent now, I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that if I come again, I will not spare.*" He had threatened this in his former letter (1 Cor. iv. 13-19), in which he had also indicated the severity (1 Cor. v. 5), and spoken of "delivering them to Satan," an expression which probably means not only excommunication, but the infliction of corporal suf-

fering. The blindness of Elymas and the death of Ananias and Saphira are instances of the power of the apostles over the body of men. This chastisement would be dealt not only to the notorious incestuous person often referred to, but to "all other," he would "spare" none. "*I will not spare.*" A more terrible chastisement know I not than entire excommunication from the fellowship of the good. Thirdly: The discipline would demonstrate the existence of Christ in him. "*Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me.*" "They had called in question his apostolic authority, they had demanded the evidence of his divine commission. He says he would now furnish such evidence by inflicting just punishment on all offenders, and they should have abundant proof that Christ spoke by him."

He could have given this proof sooner, but he acted in this respect like Christ, and was content to appear "*weak*" amongst them, in order that his power might be more conspicuously displayed. "*For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.*" "The thought," says Dean Plumptre, "that underlies the apparently hard saying, is that the disciples of Christ share at once in their Lord's weakness and in His strength. We, too, are weak, says the apostle, we have our share in infirmities and sufferings, which are ennobled by the thought that they are ours because we are His, but we know that we shall live in the highest sense in the activities of the spiritual life, which also we shall share with

Him, and which comes to us by the power of God. This life will be manifested in the exercise of our spiritual power towards you and for your good." In the case of the truly good, in all weakness there is strength, and the weakness one day will disappear, and the strength be manifest. In this chapter we find—

II. Words of EXHORTATION. "*Examine yourselves.*" Self-scrutiny is at once a duty the most urgent, and the most neglected. Hence the universal prevalence of self-ignorance. Even men who know a great deal of the world without, are ignorant of the world within, the world of worlds. Observe,

First: The momentous point to be tested in self-scrutiny. "*Whether ye be in the faith.*" Not whether you have faith in you, for all men are more or less credulous, and have some kind

of faith in them: but whether you are "*in the faith.*" The faith here is the Gospel, or rather the Christ of the Gospel; whether you are in Christ, in the character of Christ. Intellectually and morally, all men are living in the characters of others. The grand thing is to be in the character of Christ, in His principles, sympathies, aims, &c.

Secondly: The momentous conclusion to be reached by self-scrutiny. "*Know ye not (emphatic) your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates.*" If you are in the faith, you are in His character, and He is in your life; nay, your life itself. Should you find you are not in the faith, ye are "*reprobates,*" counterfeits, spurious, not genuine; tares, not wheat; hypocrites. Here, then, is a work for every man to do, "*examine*" himself, introspect, scrutinise, de-

cide, and thus know his real moral condition. In this chapter we find—

III. Words of PRAYER. "*Now I pray to God,*" &c. For what does he pray? Not for his own reputation or himself. As if he had said, "I am not anxious about my own standing amongst you." He prays for two things, First: That they should be kept from the wrong. "*Now I pray to God that ye do no evil.*" "*Do no evil,*" nothing inconsistent with the character and teaching of Christ. "Cease to do evil, learn to do well." He prays, Secondly: That they should possess the right. "*Not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.*" "We pray not that *we* may gain a reputation as successful workers in your eyes or those of others, but that *you* may do that which

is nobly good (may advance from a negative to a positive form of holiness) even though the result of that may be that we no longer put our apostolic supernatural powers into play, and so seem to fail in the trial to which you challenge us." In this chapter we find—

IV. Words of COMFORT. "*We can do nothing against the truth.*" There are two comforting ideas here—

First: That truth is uninjurable. "*We can do nothing against the truth.*" Let the "*truth*" here stand for Jesus, who is the "*Truth*," the great moral Reality incarnated, all that is real in doctrine and duty embodied in Him, who can injure such? Man can do much against theories of truth, conventional manifestations of truth, ecclesiastical representations of truth, verbal revelations of truth. The

more he does, perhaps the better: but he can do nothing against "*the truth*," its *essence*. Man may quench all the gas lamps in the world, but he cannot dim one star. The great ethical and doctrinal truths embodied in the life and teaching of Christ are imperishable, they live in all religions. Men can destroy the forms of nature, level the mountains, dry up the rivers, burn the forests, but can do nothing against the imperishable *elements* of nature, and these elements will live, build up new mountains, open fresh rivers, and create new forests. You can do nothing against the truth.* The other comforting idea here is, Secondly: That goodness is unpunishable. "*For we are glad when we are weak and ye are strong, and this also we wish, even your perfection.*" It

is unpunishable, (a) Because it is goodness. The best of men are too "*weak*" in authority to punish those who are "*strong*" in goodness. And in truth there is no authority in the universe, even God Himself, to punish goodness. The stronger a man is in goodness, the weaker the power to chastise him. Hence Paul wishes to find them "*strong*" in goodness when he comes amongst them. He wishes this because goodness is their "*perfection*," or restoration. The way to paralyse all penal forces is to promote the growth of goodness. It is unpunishable, (b) Because it is restorative. "*Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present, I should use sharpness according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.*"

* See "Homilist," Vol. xliv., page 38.

Its destiny is "*edification*," not "*destruction*," building up, not pulling down. Moral goodness is the restorative power in the universe. In this chapter we have—

V. Words of BENEDICTION. "*Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and*

the God of love and peace shall be with you." His benedictory words imply, First: Be happy. "*Farewell*," which means rejoice, and to be happy they must be "*perfect*," "*of good comfort*," &c. The words imply, Secondly: Be blest of God. "*The grace of our Lord*," &c.

" Things are not what they Seem."

"AS UNKNOWN, AND YET WELL KNOWN," &c.—2 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

Against misrepresentations and slanders, Paul, in the context, vindicates his apostolic authority, and proclaims at the same time the unworldly principle which animated both him and his fellow-workers. These words present to us the two opposite sides of a good man's life, the secular and the spiritual. The side revealed, as seen by man, and the side in the sight of God.

I. To the secular eye he was UNKNOWN: to the

spiritual WELL-KNOWN. "*As unknown and yet well-known.*" The world has never yet rightly interpreted and understood the real life of a genuine disciple of Christ. To the world, Paul appeared an ignominious fanatic. John says, "The world knoweth us not." The world does not understand self-sacrificing love, the animating, shaping, directing principle of a godly man's life. It understands ambition, greed, revenge, but

not this. Hence men in every age, so far as they have come under the rule of this "new commandment" have been regarded as monsters unworthy of life. This explains martyrdom, aye, and the crucifixion of Christ. But though thus unknown to men, they are well-known to others. (1) Well-known to *Christ*. "I know My sheep." Christ knows all His disciples. (2) Well-known to *heavenly spirits*. They are famous in heaven. At their conversion heaven rejoiced, and over every step of their subsequent history heaven watches with a loving care.

II. To the secular eye he was DYING; to the spiritual he was LIVING. "*As dying, and behold we live.*" To worldly men Paul appeared as mortal as other men: with a frame scourged by persecution, shattered by perils, wasted by labour and want, he was nothing but

a dying man. His contemporaries knew that he would soon run himself out, and mingle with the dust of all departed men. But spiritually he was living. "*Behold, we live.*" The soul within that dying body of his was living a wonderful life—a life of Christly inspiration and aims, a life of communion with heaven: a life destined to become more sunny, vigorous, and beautiful with every aspiration and act. Living is not body-breathing, but spirit-acting, acting according to the Divine laws of our constitution.

III. To the secular eye he was MUCH TRIED: to the spiritual he was NOT DESTROYED. "*Chastened, but not killed.*" The word "*chastened*" here refers, I think, to his various scourgings, suffered in the synagogues and elsewhere. To worldly spectators, he, with all his wounds, would appear a dead man, but he was

spiritually alive. The hardships and the strifes did not touch his soul: his spiritual purposes, enjoyments, and hopes were not killed. Spiritual life is unkillable, like certain plants in the vegetable kingdom, which have their germs or roots so deep down in the soil, and so thoroughly mixed up with it, that, though you cut down the trunk, or pull up the roots from the earth, their life will break out again.

IV. To the secular eye he was VERY SORROWFUL, to the spiritual he was ALWAYS REJOICING. "*As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.*" As if Paul had said, "Under our sufferings, we seem to be very cast down and sad; dreary, degraded, and wretched does our life seem to the worldly men around us." So it often is with the life of a Christian man. But on the spiritual side, a truly godly man is "*always rejoicing,*" rejoicing in a good conscience, rejoicing in a stream of pure and noble thoughts, rejoicing in a consciousness of Divine favour.

V. To the secular eye he was VERY POOR, to the spiritual he was WEALTH-GIVING. "*As poor, yet making many rich.*" Paul and his colleagues were poor, they had suffered the loss of all things. Yet spiritually they were not only rich, but made others rich. (1) The highest work of man is to impart spiritual riches to his brother man: (3) Worldly poverty does not disqualify a man for the discharge of his sublime mission.

VI. To the secular eye he was DESTITUTE, to the spiritual he was ENORMOUSLY RICH. "*Having nothing and yet possessing all things.*" Nothing of this world's good, yet "*possessing all things,*" not legally but morally. Christliness gives us an interest in all things. "All things are yours."

Do not estimate life by appearances—things are not what they seem. Christliness with poverty, persecution and suffering, is infinitely to be preferred to wickedness with the whole world at its command.

The Philosophy of Courage.

"WE ARE CONFIDENT, I SAY," &c.—2 Cor. v. 8-10.

PAUL says we are courageous. Courage is often confounded with recklessness of life, a brutal insensibility to danger. True courage always implies two things:—(1) The existence of unavoidable dangers. He who rushes into danger is not courageous, but reckless. Paul had unavoidable dangers: "We are troubled on every side." It implies (2) True convictions of being. Ignorance of existence may make man reckless, but never courageous. What was Paul's view of life? He regarded the body as the organ of himself. He speaks of it as a "house," a "tabernacle," &c. The soul he regards as the personality of his being, "We that are in this tabernacle," &c. The soul, not the body, is the "I," or self. He regarded death as a mere change in the mode of his being. Death changes the house and the garment, it is not the extinction of the tenant or the wearer. He regarded heaven as the perfection of his being, "the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

The courage of which the apostle here speaks seems to have been based on three things:—

I.—A consciousness that his death would not ENDANGER THE INTERESTS of his being. Notice (1) His view of the interests of being. It was being "*present with the Lord.*" Notice (2) His view of the bearing of death upon the interests of being. He regarded it as the flight of the spirit into the presence of the Lord. "*Absent from the body, present with the Lord.*" A view of death, this, antagonistic to the ideas of purgatory, annihilation, soul-sleep. Notice (3) His state of mind under the influence of these thoughts. "*Willing rather to be absent from the body.*" His courage is founded on—

II.—A consciousness that death will not DESTROY THE GREAT PURPOSES of being. It is the characteristic of a rational being that he has some purpose in life, it is that in which he lives, it makes life valuable to him. To a man who has no purpose in life, or has lost his purpose, life is deemed of little worth. What was Paul's purpose in life? "*Wherefore we labour that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him.*" Is not this purpose sublimely reasonable? If there be a God, does not reason teach that to please Him should be the supreme purpose of all intelligent creatures? Now Paul felt that death would not destroy this purpose. It destroys the purpose of the voluptuous, avaricious, &c., and hence to them it is terrible. But it does not destroy the chief purpose of the Christian. In all worlds and times his chief purpose will be to be "*accepted of Him.*" His courage was founded on—

III.—A consciousness that death would NOT PREVENT THE REWARDS of being. "*We must all appear* (or be made manifest), *before the judgment-seat of Christ.*" Success, while it should never be regarded either as a rule of conduct or a test of character, must ever have an influence on the mind of man in every department of labour. Non-success discourages. Paul felt that his labour here would appear and be recognised hereafter. "*We must all appear,*" &c. (1) Every one shall receive the recompense of labour after death. "*Must all appear.*" None absent. (2) Every one shall receive a reward for every deed. "*That every one may receive the things done in his body.*" No lost labour. With this consciousness we may well be courageous amidst all the dangers here, and in view of the great hereafter. Dread of death is a disgrace to the Christian. "If," says Cicero, "I were now disengaged from my cumbrous body, and on my way to Elysium: and some superior being should meet me in my flight and make me the offer of returning and remaining in my body, I should, without hesitation, reject the offer: so much should I prefer going into Elysium to be with Socrates, and Plato, and all the ancient worthies, and to spend my time in converse with them." How much more should the Christian desire to be "*absent from the body, and present with the Lord.*"

Homiletical Breviaries.

Paul's Directions for Collecting the Contributions of the Corinthian Church.

“FOR AS TOUCHING THE MINISTERING TO THE SAINTS,” &c.—2 Cor. ix. 1-5.

The work of collecting was entrusted to Titus and a brother whose praise was “throughout all the churches,” and probably to other Christians more or less distinguished. Concerning the collecting of their subscriptions, three things are observable in Paul's own conduct:—I. He RECOGNISED THEIR MERITS. “*For as touching the ministering to the saints it is superfluous for me to write to you; for I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia that Achaia was ready a year ago, and your zeal hath provoked very many.*” He gives them full credit for what they had already done. They had so much cheered him some months before with the readiness with which they had entered into his beneficial enterprise, that he had boasted of them to those of Macedonia and Achaia, and he assures them that their zeal had stimulated, or “*provoked very many.*” We may be assured that Paul not only credits them for what they had done, merely as a matter of policy or politeness, but as a matter of justice. It is right that goodness in others should be recognised wherever found, and that we should with a hearty frankness praise them that do well. This is a duty sadly neglected. Another thing observable in Paul's conduct is: II. He RESPECTED THEIR REPUTATION. “*Lest haply if they of Macedonia, come with me and find you unprepared we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.*” The Apostle knew human life and the circumstances that influence it, and he apprehended that had the members of the Corinthian Church been called upon suddenly, without any previous advice, to complete the beneficent work into which they had entered so readily some twelve months before, that they might not be able on a sudden either to do justice to their own reputation, or to justify the high praise he had given them. The reputation of Christian men should always be sacredly respected. Reputation is moral power; deprive a man of

this, and he is powerless in society; deprive a Church of this, and you leave it as infirm as a merchant without credit. Respect for the reputation of good men is the duty of all. No man can deprive me of my character, but he may of my reputation, and without my reputation my social influence is nil.

“The purest treasure mortal times afford,
Is spotless reputation, that away
Men are but gilded loam, or painted clay.”—*Shakespeare.*

Another thing observable in Paul's conduct is: III. He STUDIED THEIR CONVENIENCE. “*Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty,*” &c. “Every one knows,” says Robertson, “how different is the feeling with which we give when charity is beforehand, from that which we give when charitable collections come side by side with debts and taxes. The charity which finds us unprepared is a call as hateful as that of any creditor whom it is hard to pay. Paul knew this well, he knew that if the Corinthians were taken unawares their feelings would be exasperated towards him with shame, and also towards the saints at Jerusalem, to whom they were constrained to give. Therefore he gave timely notice.” Special duties have times and seasons. There are moods of mind, and passing circumstances so unfavourable as to render their discharge almost impossible, hence men's conveniences have to be studied.

The Apostle in recognising merits, respecting reputations, and studying conveniences should be studied as an example by all Christian ministers in dealing with their people.

Godly Sorrow.

FOR THOUGH I MADE YOU SORRY,” &c.—2 Cor. vii. 8-11.

Three remarks here concerning the Godly Sorrow that was wrought on the minds of the members of the Corinthian Church:—

I. It was PRODUCED BY A FAITHFUL REPROOF OF WRONG. There were, as we have seen, certain evils more or less prevalent in the Church at Corinth, such as schism, idolatry, unchastity, and abuse of the Lord's Supper. These so affected the mind of the Apostle that his letter abounded with strong reproof. Concerning the reproofs he administered to them, two facts are noteworthy—First, They

caused him much pain. “*For though I made you sorry with a letter I do not repent, though I did repent.*” Men, more or less malign in their nature, take pleasure in dealing out reproaches and reproofs, but to those whose natures are of the genial and the generous type, few things are more painful than the administration of reproofs. Paul no doubt felt it so, still it had to be done. Loyalty to his conscience and his mission demanded it. A loving nature recoils at the idea of giving pain to any one. Concerning the reproofs, Secondly: They were administered with the tenderest affection. In almost every reproving sentence contained in his letter, there beats the pulse of affection, and it is evermore this love that invests reproof with a heart-penetrating and melting power. With the tenderest love ministers should always reprove, admonish, and exhort. Another remark concerning this Godly sorrow is—II. It was ESSENTIALLY DIFFERENT TO THE SORROW OF THE WORLD. “*Now I rejoice not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance,*” &c. Great is the difference between Godly sorrow and worldly sorrow. (1) The one is selfish, the other is generous. In the former the man regrets having done the wrong thing simply on account of inconvenience to himself; in the latter the anguish is in the wrong itself. (2) The one results in future regret, the other in future joy. All the sorrow that an ungodly man has felt will lead to some deeper, darker, more terrible distress. (3) The one leads to ruin, the other to salvation. See the results of worldly sorrow in Cain (Gen. iv. 12); in Saul (1 Sam. xxi. 3-6); in Ahithophel (2 Sam. xvii. 23); in Judas (Matt. xxviii. 3-25). See Godly sorrow in David (Ps. li.); in the prodigal son (Luke xvi.); in Peter (Matt. xxvi.); in the converts on the Day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 44-47). Another remark concerning this Godly sorrow is, III. It WROUGHT GREAT RESULTS IN THE SOUL. It wrought, (1) Solicitude. “*What carefulness it wrought in you.*” Careful to resist the wrong and pursue the right. (2) Deprecation. “*What clearing of yourselves.*” How anxious to show your disapproval of the evil of which you have been guilty. (3) Anger. “*What indignation.*” Indignation not against the sinner, but against the sin. This is a holy anger. (4) Dread. “*What fear.*” Dread, not of suffering, but of sin; not of God, but of the devil. This fear is, indeed, the highest courage. He who shrinks from the morally wrong is the truest hero. (5) Longing. “*What vehement desire.*” What longing after a better life. All these expressions mean in-

tense earnestness, and earnestness not about temporal matters, which is common and worthless, but about spiritual matters, which is rare and praiseworthy. Genuine repentance is antagonistic to indifference; it generates earnestness in the soul, it leads to the most strenuous efforts, to the most vehement cries to heaven. "Sorrow in itself," says F. W. Robertson, "is a thing neither good nor bad; its value depends on the spirit of the person on whom it falls. Fire will inflame straw, soften iron, or harden clay; its effects are determined by the object with which it comes in contact. Warmth develops the energies of life or helps the progress of decay. It is a great power in the hot-house, a great power also in the coffin; it expands the leaf, matures the fruit, adds precocious vigour to vegetable life; and warmth, too, develops with tenfold rapidity the weltering process of dissolution. So, too, with sorrow. There are spirits in which it develops the seminal principle of life: there are others in which it prematurely hastens the consummation of irreparable decay."

God's Gift of Special Power to Man.

"FOR THOUGH I SHOULD BOAST," &c.—2. Cor. x. 8-10.

These verses present to our attention *God's gift of special power to man*. The "*authority*" of which the apostle here speaks was, in all probability, a supernatural endowment. Such an endowment he both claimed and manifested (See Acts xiii. 8-11; xiv. 8-10; xv. 9-12). Having this power he was superior even to the ablest of his censors in Corinth, and he felt that should he "*boast somewhat*" of this there was no reason for him to be ashamed. The words suggest three remarks concerning such special gift of power to man: I. IT IS UNDER MAN'S CONTROL. Paul's language seems to imply that he might or might not use his "*authority*" or power: it did not coerce him, it did not make him a mere instrument, it did not overbear his will or infringe in any way his freedom of action. God has given exceptional power to some men, to Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Peter, &c.; but in all cases it seemed to leave them free, free to use it or not, to use it in this direction or in that. The Maker and Manager of the universe respects evermore the free agency with which He has endowed His rational and moral offspring. We may enslave ourselves, but He will not, and will always treat us as responsible for

all we do. Another remark suggested concerning God's gift of special power to man is, II. ITS GREAT DESIGN IS USEFULNESS. "*The Lord hath given us for edification and not for your destruction.*" He gives power to men not to pull down, but to build up. Usefulness is the grand end of our existence. We are formed not to injure but to bless our fellow creatures. Whatever endowments we have, be they ordinary or transcendent, all are given by our Maker to promote truth, and virtue, and human happiness through the world. Alas, how extensively men pervert these high gifts of heaven. The other remark suggested concerning God's gift of special power to man is, III. IT IS NO PROTECTION FROM MALICE. Though Paul was thus so distinguished by signal endowments he was nevertheless the subject of bitter envy and cruel slander. "*For his letters say they, are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech is contemptible.*" Did the supernatural power with which some of the old Hebrew prophets were endowed, shield men from the malice of men? How were Moses, Elisha and Elijah treated? The fact is, the higher gifts a man has the more he is exposed to the malice of others: the more distinguished a man is in gifts and graces the more he will arouse among his contemporaries the spirit of detraction and hate. It was so with Christ Himself.

Paul's Special Power.

"DO YE LOOK ON THINGS AFTER THE OUTWARD APPEARANCES"?
—2 Cor. x. 7.

These verses point to two evils. I. JUDGING FROM APPEARANCE. "*Do ye look on things after the outward appearance?*" or that "*are before your face.*" The teachers at Corinth who were opposed to the Apostle prided themselves on their external advantages, and regarded themselves as superior in appearance, rank and manners to Paul, they judged from appearance. This judgment led them to regard Paul as their inferior. But was he inferior? Was he not, in all that is intrinsically excellent, in mental capacity, in spiritual knowledge, in Christly enthusiasm, and supernatural power, their superior, the very prince of the apostles? Men judged Christ by the "*outward appearance,*" and how false, wicked, and pernicious, their judgment turned out to be. The only true test is the fruit. "By their

fruits ye shall know them," fruits, not actions—which often misrepresent the character of the soul—but productions that are the natural, complete, and spontaneous outgrowth and expression of the leading moral principles of man's life. Because men judge from "*the outward appearance*," wolves in society pass for sheep, paupers for princes, devils for saints, churls for philanthropists, &c. The verse points to the evil of, II. ARROGATING SUPERIOR CHRISTLINESS. "*If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again that as he is Christ's even so are we Christ's.*" Whilst there were those in the Corinthian Church who said some of them were of Paul, of Apollos, of Cephas, there were some who said they were of Christ. They wished to be regarded as superior to all, as knowing more of Christ, being more intimate with Him, having a stronger claim upon Him. It might be that some of the members of this party had (not like Paul) been with Christ while on earth, had talked with Him, walked with Him, feasted with Him, and of this they would boast. But thousands could boast of this who had no vital fellowship with Christ. There always have been men in Churches who have arrogated superior piety. I have known not a few, not distinguished by any spiritual nobleness, who were accustomed to speak of Him as "*my Christ*," "*my Saviour*," "*my Redeemer*," implying that He was more to them than to others.

Inviting Men to Christ the Supreme Object of Preaching.

"WOULD TO GOD YE COULD BEAR WITH ME A LITTLE," &c.—2 Cor. xi. 1-4.

The purpose and spirit of this chapter are the same as the preceding one. The apostle proceeds against the charges which they had brought against him, and the same breeze of irony breathes through all. These verses seem to be his defence against the charge of his foolish boasting, "*Would to God*," or rather would that ye could "*bear with me a little in my folly*," or better in a little foolishness. What I have said already, you say is foolish boasting; be it so, bear with me whilst I proceed in the same strain of self-vindication, tolerate me a little further. It has been observed that no less than five times in this chapter does the expression "*bearing with*," or "*burden*" occur, and the word "*folly*" eight times; and the inference is, that the

expressions refer to something which he had heard of some of their remarks concerning him. Paul here seems to claim their continued attention on two grounds: I. THE GREATNESS OF THE WORK HE HAD ACCOMPLISHED AMONGST THEM. "*For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*" He had "*espoused,*" or united them to Christ, as the bride to the bridegroom, a relation the most sacred, close, tender, and lasting. To unite men in *supreme affection*, and *supreme purpose* is the grand work of the Christian minister, and what work on earth is so sublimely beneficent and glorious, as to make men *one* with Christ? It is impossible to make men one with a creed, or a Church, and were it possible it would be to the last degree undesirable. But to make men one with Christ, is at once most *practical*, and *urgent*,—practical because God has established an infallible method, and urgent because souls disconnected from Christ are in a guilty and ruined condition. Paul claims their attention on the ground of—II. THE DREAD WHICH HE HAD LEST THAT WORK SHOULD BE UNDONE. "*But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*" It would seem from this that the union of souls to Christ is not absolutely indissoluble, that a separation is possible; and, in truth, were it not so, man would, with the union lose his freedom of action, and would become a mere instrument. Angels fell from their primitive holiness, our first parents from innocence, and Peter for a time, from connection with Christ. The holiest creature in the universe is conscious of a power by which he could break away from his orbit of purity and obedience, otherwise he would have no sense of personal virtuousness. The apostle here seems to ascribe the *possible dissolution of the marriage of souls to Christ to Satan*, whom he here represents as the "*serpent,*" implying his belief at once in the personality, moral maliciousness, and mighty spiritual influence of this superhuman intelligence. See how he does this. First: By insidiously corrupting the mind, "*I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*" There can be no union between a soul morally corrupt and impure, and Christ. The moment those who are united to Christ become corrupted, the union is at an end, the rotten branch falls from the trunk. So

Satan's work is to "*corrupt*," and thus undo the grandest of all works. This he does insidiously, or craftily, just as he dealt with Eve (Genesis iii.). How craftily this huge enemy of souls pursues his soul-corrupting work! "Beware of his devices." Satan does this, Secondly: By the agency of false teachers. "*For if he that cometh, preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit which ye have not received, or another Gospel which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.*" There is but one absolute Christ, but as many subjective ones as call themselves Christians, and not a few of the subjective ones are pernicious caricatures of the true Jesus of Nazareth. These are preached, and the preaching of them corrupts souls, and fulfils the purpose of the devil. There is as much difference between the Christ of the Gospels, and the Christ of the creeds, as there is between the cedar growing in Lebanon, and that cedar reduced to its primitive elements in the laboratory of the chemist; in the one form beautifully attractive, in the other hideously repulsive. Such Christ's were preached in Corinth. Paul, perhaps, specially refers to some one who was preaching "*another Jesus*," and ironically he intimates that such preachers they tolerated. "*Ye might well bear with him.*" As if he had said, such men who are doing the work of the devil ye would tolerate.

A Picture of Religious Impostors.

"FOR YE SUFFER, IF A MAN BRING YOU INTO BONDAGE, IF A MAN DEVOUR YOU, IF A MAN TAKE OF YOU, IF A MAN EXALT HIMSELF, IF A MAN SMITE YOU ON THE FACE."—2 Cor. xi. 20.

This verse suggests five things concerning religious impostors: I. They are TYRANNIC. "*If a man bring you into bondage.*" The reference is undoubtedly to those described in ver. 13, who were false teachers in Corinth. They were with their dogmas and rites enslaving the souls of men. False teaching always makes men spiritual serfs. Heathens are slaves to their priest, fanatics are slaves to their leader, Papists are slaves to their Pope. True teaching makes men free men. Spiritual bondage is infinitely worse than physical or political. A man's body may be in chains, yet he may be free in spirit; but if his spirit is enslaved, he himself is in captivity. The work of a false teacher is always to subdue souls to

himself, the work of the true to win souls to Christ. Even conventional Christianity is enslaving. II. They are RAPACIOUS. "*If a man devour you.*" False teachers devour widow's houses. They teach for money, turn temples and churches into shops. They shear the sheep instead of feeding them. Greed is their inspiration. III. They are CRAFTY. "*If a man take of you.*" The expression "*of you*" is not in the original. The idea to me seems to be, if a man takes you in, deceives, and entraps you. This is just what religious impostors do, they take men in, they cajole men, and make them their dupes. IV. They are ARROGANT. "*If a man exalt himself.*" It is characteristic of false teachers that they assume great superiority. With this they endeavour to impress men by their costume, their bearing, and their pompous utterances. They arrogate a lordship over human souls. V. They are INSOLENT. "*If a man smite you on the face.*" This is the last form of outrage, no greater insult could be offered to a man. The religious impostor has no respect for the rights and dignities of man as man. With his absurd dogmas and arrogancies he is everlastingly smiting men on "*their face,*" on their reason, their consciences, and their self-respect.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books. it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

MEMORIAL OF REV. JOHN MARSHALL. Compiled by JAMES IRVING.
Tunbridge Wells: R. Pelton, The Broadway.

The Rev. John Marshall seems to have been one of those very able, thoughtful, scholarly, and instructive preachers, who do their work unpretentiously, shrinking from popularity. No man would have graced the Chair of the Congregational Union, or delivered a more soul-elevating address than he. Yet he never sought the position, still less canvassed for it; and because of this he was never

invited to it by those who decide such matters—the officials who pull the strings. There is every reason to believe that a man of his intellectual and moral type, would have disdained such a position, as more of a degradation than an honour. The men of minor mould alone struggle for prominence in every sphere. This memoir of this able man, who was minister of one Church for upwards of fifty years, is written with great taste, just appreciation, and with much literary skill and strength. The Funeral Sermon delivered by the Author of the Memoir is one of no ordinary merit, it reflects credit on his departed tutor, under whom he studied for seven years. It is free alike from all roar and rant, maudling sentiment and mimic eloquence. It is clear, vigorous, and solemn. Every student of the ministry should procure this memorial and study it well.

OLD FAITHS IN NEW LIGHT. By REV. NEWMAN SMYTH, D.D. With Prefatory note by REV. A. BRUCE, D.D. London: Charles Higham, 27A, Farringdon Street.

Dr. Bruce in his prefatory note to this volume says: "I confidently expect that British readers will find it at once attractive and helpful. Its author is one of those who in these days are endeavouring to present in a fresh form the substance and the evidence of the Christian faith: heartily attached to Catholic orthodoxy, but sitting loose from traditional dogmatism and the old stereotyped methods of apologetics. The point of view from which he regards the subject of Revelation and all relative topics is the modern scientific idea of development. The scheme of thought is worked out with much vigour, and the style is enriched with literary graces springing out of a poetic fancy, combined with a glowing moral earnestness." The subjects discussed in this volume are: The idea of development and the new questions about old faiths—The Historical Growth of the Bible—The Course of Moral Education and Progress of Revelation—The Advance of Knowledge and the Scientific Tendency of the Bible—The Culmination in the Christ—The Uniqueness of Jesus—The Naturalness of Christ—The Unfinished World and its Completion—The Process of Resurrection and the End. These subjects are of transcendent interest, and are here exhibited in a somewhat new light, with an unusual amount of scientific intelligence, philosophic insight, and intellectual vigour. The following extract may give an idea of the

author's thinking and style:—"Looking out from Patmos' lonely cliff, St. John saw before him the boundless sea—the sepulchre of fleets—the oblivion of the pride of kings, the devouring sky, from the days of old the restless, ever hungry sea: and the sea spreading its waste of changing waters round the whole horizon of the revelator, became to him the one great emblem of mutability, the image of this passing world—age; and he saw a 'new heaven and a new earth, and there was no more sea,' the whole changing world is passed away. St. John also saw the stars rising from the changeful sea, and sinking into its insatiable depths; the stars of heaven as they rose and fell marking succession and time: and in the spirit the revelator saw above the sea and from beyond the stars another vision of exceeding glory: for he saw an angel standing upon the sea, and upon the earth, who 'lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, that there should be time no longer.' Time itself shall pass away with the restless sea, and the rising and the setting of the stars, marking the change of night and day: and eternity shall take the place of the succession of events in time. What the order of eternity into which our world-age shall be dissolved, is like we cannot tell; we gain, perhaps, the only possible suggestion of it, not when we add years to years interminably, but when we lose all sense of time in thinking: when events lie in memory or imagination like a picture before us, translated as it were, out of time, and in one mental vision we see them as a continuous whole. Inconceivable the eternity around time may seem, the Bible teaches that there is another order of existence which is not temporal, and into which the heavens and the earth, and all things therein, shall pass away." We heartily commend this volume to all, old or young, who are engaged in pulpit work, as suited to do that which only literary productions of the highest type can accomplish, break the monotony of religious thought, and provoke the highest kind of thinking on the highest subjects.

ANONYMOUS PERSONAGES. By REV. ROBERT YOUNG, M.A. With Introductory Preface by the BISHOP OF BATH AND WELLS. London: Wade & Co., 11, Ludgate Arcade.

This is a small book, but contains most suggestive and en-

lightened discourses on no less than twenty subjects, such as, Abraham's Celestial Visitors—The Captain of the Lord's Host—Gideon's Angelic Visitor—The Tidings Bearer—The Spoilers—The Shield Bearer of Goliath—The Man who Professed to have Slain Saul—The Destroying Angel—The True Mother—The Queen of Sheba—The Widow of Zarepath—The Servant of Elijah—The Deaf and Dumb Man who had a Devil—The Enquiring Lawyer—The Grateful Leper—The Angel of Death—The Widow of Nain's Son—The Dropsical Man—The Intelligent Lawyer—The Paralytic Man—The Unnamed Royal Captives—The Nobleman's Son—The Envious Presidents—The Baffled Pharisees—The Woman with an Issue of Blood." The preface is written by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, who expresses a high judgment concerning it. Whilst the work is extremely valuable in itself, our readers we trust will be stimulated to purchase it; the proceeds go to the widow whom the author has left with very young children, inasmuch as entirely dependent on her. Hence the generous no doubt will feel it their duty to promote its circulation.

A SYSTEM OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE. By DR. DORNER. Translated by Rev. ALFRED CAVE, B.A. and Rev. J. S. BANKS. Vols. III., IV. and V. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, George Street.

We have called the attention of our readers to the first two volumes of this great work. The third volume consists of two parts; the first part, the Doctrine of Sin; the second, the Doctrine of Christ. In the fourth volume the second part is continued, the first main division includes ecclesiastical development, dogmatic investigation, &c. Those who wish to know what have been the theological views propounded by the theologians of Christendom on every Christian doctrine and ritual, must become possessed of this work.

THE STUDENT'S COMMENTARY ON THE HOLY BIBLE. Abridged and Edited by J. M. FULLER, M.A. Vol. IV. London: John Murray, Albermarle Street.

This volume of the Student's Commentary concludes the Old Testament. The critical notes on Isaiah are from the pen of Dr. Kay, Canon of St. Albans; on Jeremiah and Lamentations by Dr. Payne Smith; on Ezekiel, by Rev. J. Currey, D.D., Prebendary of St. Paul's; on Daniel, by Rev. H. J. Rose, B.D., late Archdeacon

of Bedford ; and Rev. J. M. Fuller, M.A., on Hosea ; and Jonah, by Rev. E. Huxtable, M.A. ; Prebendary of Wells, on Joel and Obadiah by Rev. F. Meyrick, M.A. ; on Amos, Nahum, and Zephaniah, by Rev. R. Gandell, M.A. ; on Micah and Habakkuk, by Canon Cook and Rev. Samuel Clark ; on Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, by Rev. W. Drake, M.A., Canon of Worcester. We need not characterise this most invaluable work, it is so well-known ; nor need we recommend it, for it carries with it its own commendation. We have no doubt that it will find a place in the library of every theological student.

THE BETHEL FLAG ; OR, SERMONS TO SEAMEN. By ROBERT PHILIP, D.D. London : Philip & Son, 32, Fleet Street.

We were personally acquainted and somewhat intimate with Dr. Robert Philip, the author of this book. We have exchanged pulpits with him, and are acquainted with many of his works, his "Experimental Guides," and his volume on the "Eternal." As a thinker he was thoroughly independent and vigorous, and as a writer pithy, quaint and suggestive. We are glad to receive this volume containing the interesting sketch of his life and several valuable and interesting discourses. The sermons are suitable for all, but admirably adapted for seamen, to whom they are specially addressed.

THE HOMILIST : EXCELSIOR SERIES. Vols. I. to VII.

This Series, the *last* under the editorship of Dr. Thomas, is now complete. Each volume contains discourses more or less full on upwards of ONE HUNDRED passages of Scripture, making in all more than 700 texts discussed in the Series. Most of these have seldom been preached from. One special element of value is that it contains, *from the pen of the Editor*, sketches on *every passage* in Paul's *two Epistles to Corinthians*. Besides the sermons, there is a great variety of other articles, on literature, science, biography, criticism, and philosophy, all intended and suited to aid preachers in producing fresh and effective discourses. Many of the articles are from the pens of the most able men of the age. In this Series, as well as in all the preceding, the grand aim of the Editor has been to present to his readers, in the *fewest possible* words, thoughts the most suggestive, spiritual, and elevating. He has learnt that there are but few men, even eminent as scholars and ecclesiastics, whose contributions would meet the demands of "HOMILIST" students.

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Its mission is not to supply Sermons for indolent or incompetent preachers, but stimulus and tonic for the true-hearted, hard-working, and genuine teacher. It does not deal in the "ready-made," but in the raw material. It only admits contributions of the most condensed and suggestive character. It requires things, not words—healthy saplings, just rising into sight and struggling into shape, not lifeless timber, however exquisitely carved or brilliantly polished. The former may grow, the latter must rot. It prefers one life-germ to a cart-load of manufactured sermons. It does not treat sacred texts as pegs on which to hang artistic discourses, but as bread-corn for hungry souls. "THE HOMILIST" acts upon the principle that that author serves his reader best, not who gives, but who suggests the most thought, and thus brings out from the reader's own soul thoughts and thought-producing powers of which before he was utterly unconscious.

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